

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA



THESIS

**ON-THE-JOB TRAINING
FOR CONTRACT SPECIALISTS (GS-1102)
AT FLEET AND INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY
CENTER (FISC) DETACHMENT WASHINGTON**

by

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December 1995

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FOR CONTRACT SPECIALISTS (GS-1102)
AT FLEET AND INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY CENTER (FISC)
DETACHMENT WASHINGTON**

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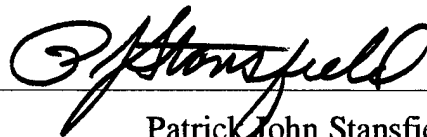
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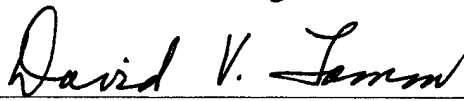
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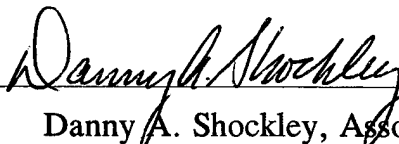


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ABSTRACT

This thesis focused on the training requirements of GS-1102 Contract Specialists. In June 1995, a survey was taken of thirty-five contract specialists and ten supervisors at the Fleet and Industrial Supply Center, Norfolk, Washington Detachment. An analysis of the responses was conducted in an effort to develop a training and qualification plan for this command. Principal findings include: there is a significant lack of time dedicated to training and OJT, the training needs of junior interns are different from those of more senior contract specialists, and timing of DAWIA courses are an important aspect of the intern program. Recommendations are: supervisors should conduct training in a way that allows for production and training to go on concurrently, the establishment of a Training Requirements Review Board to oversee the training at the command, training should be conducted with people of similar experience levels and in small groups, the Federal Acquisition Institute's Contract Specialists Blueprints are a useful starting point for development of training lessons, a case approach is a good vehicle for delivering training in this setting.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. FOCUS OF THIS STUDY

The vast complexity of laws, regulations and policies that govern the professional life of a Federal Government Civilian contract specialist (GS-1102 series) is astounding. It is critical to the success of the individual and the organization that they synthesize these laws, regulations and policies quickly and efficiently. There are many formal training and education programs that organizations, such as the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), tailor specifically to individual topics that address these issues. This research, however, will concentrate on the training conducted at the local command. The focus of this research will be in the area of on-the-job Training (OJT) and Personal Qualification Standards (PQS) for GS-1102 series Contract Specialists and Contract Interns.

B. OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this research is to determine the training needs of contract specialists (GS-1102s) and how best to incorporate those needs into a comprehensive training program that the local command will administer. A secondary thrust of this research is to tailor a qualification program for the 1102s that will provide a clear road map for the professional development of these contract specialists.

Appendix A provides a recommended training and qualification program tailored to the needs of the Fleet and Industrial Supply Center, Norfolk, Washington Detachment. The effectiveness of on-the-job training will be analyzed to validate that this form of instruction is appropriate at the local level, to identify its limitations, and exploit the strengths of this form of knowledge enrichment. The area of organizational culture will also be explored to cultivate the best aspects as it relates to this type of training. Finally the Federal Acquisition Institute's Contract Specialist Handbook blueprints were addressed for use as the primary tool in the training program.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In consonance with the objectives laid out above, the following research question was addressed:

How might an in-house training program be structured that most efficiently develops the skills, knowledge and competencies required of GS-1102 series personnel and interns with on-the-job training as the cornerstone?

In support of the primary research question the following subsidiary research questions were also addressed:

1. What type of contracting workload does the Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC), Norfolk, Washington detachment (hereafter the FISC Det Washington) have?

2. What education level and skills do the GS-1102

contract specialists and interns at FISC Det Washington possess?

3. What is the best use of available resources at FISC Det Washington to achieve the goal of a quality training program which emphasizes on-the-job training?

4. What qualities are common to successful on-the-job training programs?

5. What should the training and qualification program at FISC Det Washington look like?

D. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The information used for this study was gathered from questionnaires and personal interviews with people from the FISC Det Washington, the Federal Acquisition Institute, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition (ASN(RDA)). An extensive review of the FAI Contract Specialist Handbook blueprints was conducted to decide it's relevance to the FISC Det Washington workload.

An assessment of the FISC Det Washington workload was conducted to decide what types of contracting competencies they use most frequently and which of these competencies should have the heaviest concentration of training.

The literature used in this study was compiled from multiple sources, including the Defense Logistics Information Exchange (DLSIE), the Infotrac retrieval system, current

Federal and Department of Defense regulations and supplementary directives, previous theses, and a review of current publications and periodicals relevant to this area of study.

E. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study will look at the contract specialist (GS-1102) personnel assigned to the FISC Det Washington. This will be a case study of these Federal Government civilian, GS-1102 series contract specialist personnel, and the training they presently have available to them and the training they feel would provide the best potential for professional development. It will focus on the intern program which employs GS-1102 personnel at the GS-7, GS-9 and GS-11 levels. Because only one active duty Navy Lieutenant is assigned to FISC Det Washington the NACO program will not be specifically addressed, however, it is believed that this research and the training and qualification program will be useful to NACOs.

F. LIMITATIONS

While this study may suffer because of the common problem of limited resources in terms of funds and time, it is believed that the funding and personal resources expended were sufficient to address the main issues. It is important to point out that the finished product is the starting point for the FISC Det Washington. Any training program is an attempt

to influence a process improvement strategy and thus by its nature it must continually evolve and improve to be effective.

G. ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that the reader is familiar with the terminology and basic processes of the acquisition and contracting field as well as basic Navy terminology.

H. DEFINITIONS

1. GS-1102: GS-1102 personnel are those tasked with acquisition for items totaling more than \$50,000 and are referred to as contract specialists. A basic requirement for entry into the Contract Specialist Intern program (a major focus of this study) was a college degree with a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale.

2. Training: Imparting of knowledge in a specific competency or process that will enable a person to complete assigned tasks in a manner consistent with the policies and expectations of management.

3. On-the-job training: Use of an actual work site as the setting for instructing workers while engaging in productive work. [Ref 15, p. 240]

3. Qualification: A series of requirements, approved by management, where in satisfactory completion demonstrate a candidate's ability to function independently in the execution

of management's policies and expectations.

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This thesis is organized in a way that will give the reader an understanding of the training problems inherent in any organization and methods which can effectively deal with these problems. It will analyze the concept of on-the-job training, look at unique aspects of the FISC Det Washington workload and personnel and provide recommendations to improve the training program.

Chapter II will analyze literature to find support for the assumption that on-the-job training is an effective method of achieving skills and competencies required to perform contracting functions.

Chapter III will provide a presentation and analysis of data collected via a questionnaire given to the FISC Det Washington GS-1102s and interns.

Chapter IV will provide a presentation and analysis of data collected via a questionnaire given to the FISC Det Washington supervisors.

Chapter V will provide a summation of the research work including the conclusions and recommendations of the researcher. The appendix will provide a wealth of information on the specific questions asked, a list of interviewees and the recommended training and qualification program.

II. FRAMEWORK AND BACKGROUND

A. FRAMEWORK

Training is ubiquitous in every organization and particularly in organizations that deal in complex processes such as acquisition and contracting. It is the level of formalization of the training program that differentiates an organization. The sophistication and complexity of the organization's training program, to a large part, characterize the commitment of that organization to its people and processes.

On-the-job training (OJT) is one subset of a larger training scheme that an organization might have and will be the focus of this study. Before we begin this discussion, it is worthwhile to make a distinction between OJT and "learning through experience," the latter implying a hit-or-miss form of training which is inefficient.[Ref 6, p. 1] This thesis will view OJT as a structured approach to enhancing the competency and knowledge of the contract specialist. As mentioned in chapter I, OJT within the context of this research, is training that is conducted at the work site during the normal course of business. Further it is training conducted by employees, peer or supervisory, or self paced with the use of training aids such as computers or hardcopy manuals.

Making a distinction between general versus specific training is useful.[Ref 17, p. 535]

In his book *Human Capital*, Gary Becker (1964, 1975) classified on-the-job training as "general" if it raises the worker's productivity equally in many firms, and "specific" if it is of value only in the training firm. Becker suggests that most training was some combination of the two types.

For this research breaking these two apart is difficult because the competencies learned in contracting are of value across many different jobs both in and out of Government work. That said, the focus of this study and the training program at FISC Det Washington will be "specific" training vice general training. Examples of these two would be training in cost analysis would be "specific" and training on ethics would be "general".

B. BACKGROUND

The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and the implementing guidance provided by the respective agencies and departments form the basis for the rules and regulations that the contract specialist must follow. In consonance with these laws and regulations are sound business practices that must be mastered to be an effective contract specialist. How best to incorporate this tremendous volume of information into a workforce is a daunting task, however, it is critical to the long-term success of the organization.

The idea of "professionalizing" the acquisition workforce is not new. Executive branch studies and reports such as the 1970 Fitzhugh Commission, The 1972 Commission on Government

Procurement and the 1983 Grace Commission Report have all cited the need for increased training and professionalism in the acquisition workforce.[Ref 16, p. 13]

1. The Packard Commission

In July 1985, The Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, known as the Packard Commission, was tasked in part to look at among other things the procurement system. One of the recommendations from the panel was:[Ref 16, p.15]

...establish business-related education and experience criteria for civilian contracting personnel, which will provide a basis for the professionalization of their career paths.

Another important outcome of the Packard Commission was Public Law 99-433, known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which set a 24 college credit hour requirement for GS-1102 Series employees.[Ref 16, p. 17] The researcher believes this requirement is worth pointing out because it establishes a rough baseline that an OJT program can be built upon. Many more Packard recommendations could be brought up but the reader is asked to acknowledge that a major theme of the Packard Commission Report was professionalism within the acquisition workforce.

2. The Acquisition Enhancement (ACE) Initiatives

In August 1985, then Deputy Secretary of Defense William

H. Taft IV in a lesser known action, directed a comprehensive review of actions needed to promote a more professional contracting workforce.[Ref 1, p. V] This was apparently in response to concerns about the quality of training for contract specialists and some other acquisition disciplines. The results of the report indicated that there was a significant training requirement within DoD. In order satisfactorily to meet this demand a coordinated effort across Service and Agency lines would be required. One of the recommendations of this study was the immediate establishment of the Department of Defense University of Acquisition Management. Under this University concept there would be various colleges established to specialize in specific acquisition elements. These institutions form the backbone of the formal training available to contract specialists.

3. The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act

Finally in November of 1990 Congress passed Public Law 101-510 known as the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). The primary emphasis is on increased education, training and qualification requirements.[Ref 16, p. 21] DAWIA emphasized the need for improving the quality and professionalism of all personnel involved in the acquisition process, both civilian and military.[Ref 16, p. 22] The focus of all these initiatives and laws were clear, that being to raise the level of professionalism in the acquisition

workforce.

None of these reports, however, addressed the specific area of OJT. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the literature dealing with training, OJT and how it fits in with an organization's structure, and the concept of OJT as a method for achieving skills and competencies. It is anticipated that this literature review will uncover the basic requirements of a successful OJT program.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

In the broadest sense, an organization's culture will dictate the commitment that organization will have toward its training program. In the case of Boston-based John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company, the nation's eighth largest insurer, they have included a pledge in their mission statement to provide professional development for their employees. Their assumption is that education is a lifelong pursuit that can be related to important corporate goals and therefore can be traced to the "bottom line." [Ref 9, p. 15] This commitment to training is very apparent throughout the organization and fosters the environment where training is not just spoken about but "lived" by everyone in the organization. This showed a strong organizational culture that supports a strong training program.

The researcher has extensive personal experience in the

area of OJT as it is conducted at various Navy organizational levels. In every case the tools for a comprehensive OJT program were available to everyone throughout the organization. Sometimes these tools were difficult to find and were only brought out and updated specifically to satisfy an inspector's checklist. In other cases they made a commitment that training was a high priority and time was set aside to conduct this training. They expected (the command) that training was being conducted with periodic reports going up to the commanding officer to substantiate this training. In every case, however, training was celebrated as the answer to almost every problem and yet when it came to setting priorities and allocating resources it rarely rose to the top of anyone's list. The culture of the Navy, as the researcher has observed, is that OJT is viewed as a necessary part of professional development yet because it does not provide the immediate benefits that completing a specific project or evolution does it is often postponed when a scheduling conflict arises. The researcher does not believe this cultural bias is the exclusive domain of the U.S. Navy. Upon relating this segment to a fellow student, who is a member of the German Navy, this student expressed amusement at how similar our Navies are in this regard.

The researcher is not making a value judgment on the Navy's culture by suggesting that this cultural bias is right or wrong but rather that it exists. This cultural bias must

be overcome or at the very least addressed to implement a fully successful OJT program.

In Peter Senge's book *The Fifth Discipline*, he points out that the organizations that will excel in the future are those that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization. He believes that deep down everyone is a learner and that it is in our nature. He illustrates this with an example of infants and how no one has to teach an infant to learn, they basically learn how to function on their own. [Ref 17, p. 4]

It is the researcher's belief that learning organizations, as outlined by Peter Senge, are key to successfully adapting to the fast-paced changes inherent in the procurement world. The researcher believes that there is sufficient evidence as to the effectiveness of OJT to support the investment (of time and money) an organization makes in the program.

D. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT) AND THE EMPLOYEE

Another aspect that a successful OJT program needs to address is the quality of the student. A story was related about a governor who was faced with a troubled prison system and when asked what he was going to do about it said: "We're never going to have better prisons until we get a better class of prisoners." [Ref 3, p. 11] The researcher is not attempting

to equate prisoners with Federal Government employees. Rather, he is attempting to illustrate that there may be an inclination to place the blame for a poor OJT program on the employees and not on the system itself.

One concern of companies with a successful training program is that highly trained workers will leave the firm after that firm has invested significantly in employees' education and training. In the area of OJT, the training that will be conducted is specific to the organization, however, within the context of FISC Det Washington it is a transferrable skill with a significant value. This sets up a "catch 22" situation where the better you train your personnel the more opportunities they will have outside your organization.

A study by Margaret Stevens published in the *Oxford Economic Papers* concluded that, while this is a concern, the training firm can obtain a positive share of the training investment. In addition there is a positive externality to society of a training program that develops employees even if they end up leaving the firm. [Ref 18, p. 549]

Other evidence that suggests that a quality training program actually contributes to longer employee tenure can be found in an article in the British magazine *The Economist*. The article discussed a study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development that reveals that countries with longer average employee tenure have more formal training

programs. Even when they compared specific industries within the same country, this correlation between training and tenure held true.[Ref 14, p. 67]

There is strong evidence to suggest that training, and specifically OJT, should not be discouraged on the basis of fear from competitors harvesting a firm's employees.

E. LEARNING AS A STRATEGY

The concept that Peter Senge points out in his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, that "organizations learn only through people who learn" is basically saying that the sum of know-how of the group is greater than the individual parts.[Ref 2, p. 23] Taken a step further it can be shown how an organization can use learning as a business strategy.

A good example of a service industry using training as a strategy can be found in the health-care industry. Booz-Allen Health Care vice president J. Philip Lathrop states:[Ref 2, p. 23]

...[the health-care industry] needs radical surgery to survive. We in health care have made thousands of basically sound decisions over the past 30 years, unfortunately, they now add up to a mess that makes no sense. For every dollar spent on direct care, we spend \$3 to \$4 waiting for it to happen, arrange to do it and writing it down. This can't be fixed by working harder or faster.

The researcher believes that parallels can be drawn between the health care industry and the DoD acquisition

system.

A solution that Lathrop suggested was the "patient-focused hospital," one designed for the people being served.[Ref 2, p. 24] An example of a transformation that took place was at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston, and one of the keys to the transformation was a successful training program. In particular the training focused on cross-training which allowed St. Luke's to establish TeamCare, which is a system focused on the patient's needs. The result was fewer, better trained people who had direct patient contact and a two-thirds reduction in turnover.

This article, taken from *Working Woman* and written by Ms. Nancy K. Austin, coauthor with Tom Peters of *A Passion for Excellence*, illustrates that committing the time and resources to training and having the proper focus can create a strategic advantage for an organization. The difficulty in designing a training system is in finding the center of gravity, to borrow from Clausawitz, of the organization and build around that. In the health-care industry, it is around cross training and the patient. This research will attempt to identify the center of gravity of FISC Det Washington.

F. TRAINING NEW HIRES

In an organization that takes employees from a college environment into the complex business environment, it is intuitive that these individuals will need basic training before they can become productive. One expert in the training area has stated that even Harvard MBAs are incompetent until they know a company's policies and procedures.[Ref 3, p. 11] In his article "Failure to Train is Failure to Manage" Mr. Steven Brown points out that the manager's job is to get people from entry level to a level that meets or exceeds the minimum standards of the company.[Ref 3, p. 11]

Mr. Brown's article goes on to state what is obvious to most managers but is worth repeating because he does so in an efficient manner and covers the subject completely. He states that the position description is important because it tells the employee what to expect and tells managers what they expect. He suggests that new hires should not be expected to "think" (researcher acknowledges this to be controversial) but rather should be expected to "do." He is saying that it is important to give new hires clear direction and give them an opportunity for early successes. If you leave them to themselves, they will suffer unnecessary stress and feel like orphans.[Ref 3, p. 11]

Mr. Brown makes several recommendations for initial training that are appropriate for OJT. First the instructor

should be able to sum up the training session with a one-sentence statement of purpose. Without this clear statement of purpose the instructor is probably confused and the student should not be expected to sort it out. He recommends the following formula of Uncover, Discover and Recover for an effective training session:[Ref 3, p. 11]

*** Uncover:** Create a need for the material within the mind of the student. People will absorb only the bare minimum of information they need to reach their goals or objectives. Closed minds can't relate to a personal need for the material.

*** Discover:** If the instructor effectively uncovers students' minds, teaching the knowledge necessary to perform skills turns into a discovery-an Aha! experience for the student. Show and tell still works best. People learn faster when presented with an explanation and demonstration.

*** Recover:** Most trainers fail here when they move from education to training. Recovery is designed to provide students with hands-on experience. It requires maximum student participation. The most common methods used include drills, role play and case studies.

The researcher agrees that by following this formula and recommendations that this would give an organization a firm foundation for a successful training program.

G. FEDERAL ACQUISITION INSTITUTE

The Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), originally named Federal Procurement Institute, was created July 14, 1976 pursuant to Public Law 93-400 to serve as the focal point for the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of

Government-wide programs in procurement, research, education and training, and career development. Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) policy letter 92-3 requires that 58 agency heads establish a competency-based curriculum for contract specialists, contracting officers, purchasing agents, and contracting officer representatives. In addition the letter also requires FAI to support the development of such courses and maintain the Contract Specialist Workbook as the standard for contracting competencies.[Ref 8, p. 1]

The Contract Specialist Workbook comprises 78 contracting competencies. They developed these 78 competencies after the FAI surveyed more than 20,000 Federal employees to collect data on the tasks performed by personnel in Contract Management and related fields. The survey was administered by twenty-four Federal Agencies to 60% of their Contracts and Procurement Specialists (GS-1102), Purchasing Agents (GS-1105), and Industrial Specialists (GS-1150).[Ref 8, p. 1] Upon receiving the responses from the study, they formed working groups from a wide spectrum of Government Agencies, including DoD, where they analyzed the responses and they arrived at a consensus of what the competencies should be. Based on this exhaustive study they developed and first published the blueprints in 1986 and they have updated them on a continuous basis since then. The blueprints are available in their current form either in a hard copy or via computer from the FAI homepage.

The blueprints are but one vehicle that FAI has available for a training program that could all be adapted to OJT. These courses include basic level, intermediate/advanced, as well as specialized courses. One course that is particularly attractive in the setting of FISC Det Washington is the "Contract Specialist Starter Kit" that is due for release in the Spring of 1996. The developer of this starter kit is Ms. Gayle Messick. She explained to the researcher that her goal is to provide students with the tools to get started in the procurement profession. Her philosophy is to structure the training to provide students with the tools "when they need it," vice the way formal courses deliver training which is to deliver when the student is in class. The starter kit, when available on-line, will allow a brand new trainee with a computer based interactive tutorial to learn the basics of the contract specialist profession the first day they report for work. [Ref 13] The researcher believes this has the potential to become a powerful tool.

H. SUMMARY

The mid-1980s saw an increased emphasis on the training requirements of the acquisition profession. The researcher believes this was caused in part by the Defense buildup, and the increased spending that corresponded to it, a few high profile cases of acquisition fraud and mistakes, and more

attention being paid to sound business practices within the Government. These factors lead to an increased emphasis on training as one solution to these problems.

This chapter has laid out the framework and direction that this study of OJT will take. A search of the literature has shown that a successful training program needs an organizational culture that supports it and encourages its employees to continually learn. It addresses the employee and the potential fear that an employer might have in investing in training only to have the employee move on once he or she is productive.

The literature is full of examples that support the concept that a well-organized OJT program will pay lasting dividends if implemented correctly. The remainder of this thesis will address the specific issues that FISC Det Washington should focus on to implement a fully successful OJT program.

III. INTERN AND CONTRACT SPECIALIST QUESTIONS

A. BACKGROUND

In June of 1995, a formal interview questionnaire was given to thirty-five contract specialists at FISC Det Washington. The breakdown by grade of the respondents was thirteen GS-07s, four GS-09s, eight GS-11s, nine GS-12s, and one Navy Lieutenant. All questionnaires were returned.

Opinion research was the basis for the bulk of the questions that form the heart of this research project. Because the primary aim of this research was to develop a training program that satisfies the needs of FISC Det Washington, the questionnaire approach is deemed appropriate. In this setting the FISC Det Washington personnel are the customers of this research and therefore a market survey, in the form of the questionnaire, was the proper vehicle to capture these data.

Archival research, in the form of a literature review, was used to provide the study with a measure of objectivity that was lacking in the purely opinion research. The research is more heavily weighted to archival because the analysis of the customers' opinions was deemed more important in the thesis process.

B. DISCUSSION

This chapter will analyze the customer responses and attempt to reconcile them with the expectations based on the literature review. The responses will be compared between junior (GS-7s, 9s and the one LT) and senior (GS-11s and 12s) contract specialists.

When the questionnaire was written the researcher was aware that a local qualification program did not exist at FISC Det Washington. Because one desired outcome of this research was to establish a qualification program, the question was asked in the hopes of generating some solid recommendations as a baseline for this new program. Some respondents apparently took the DAWIA qualification program for the basis of the question and responded accordingly.

The survey asked for opinions and recommendations; therefore, it did not lend itself to easy "scoring". In the following section, a short paragraph explaining the intention of each question will precede presentation of the actual question. The responses will be grouped by grade level and a representative sample of answers will be provided. The analysis will discriminate between grade levels and, where appropriate, between junior and senior contract specialists. In no case will an idea or remark be omitted unless the concept has already been presented.

C. QUESTIONNAIRE CONTENT

The questionnaire gathered information on the experience level of the 1102s and how long they have been at the command. Figures 1 and 2 provide these data. The remainder of this chapter will cover the specific questions and analysis of those questions.

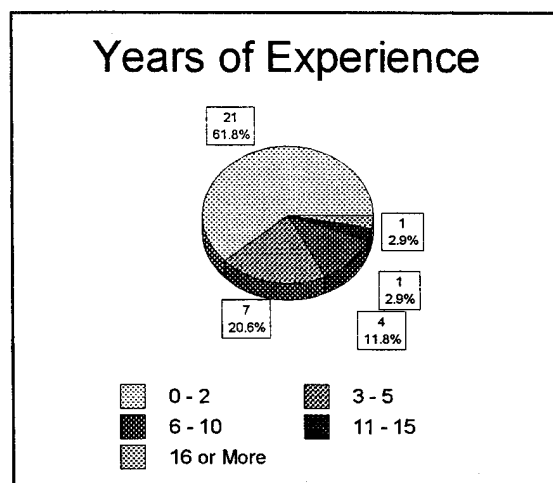


Figure 1: Experience in years

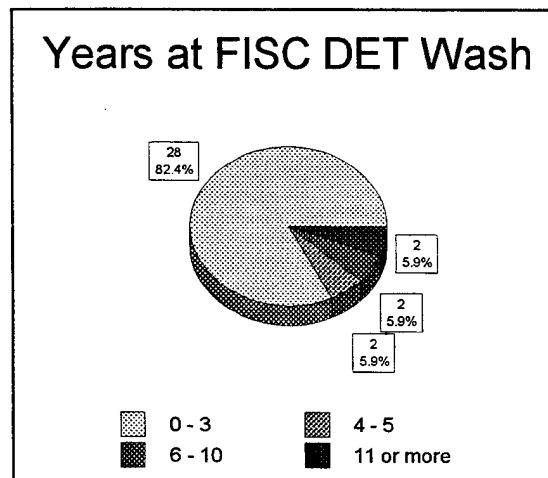


Figure 2: Years at Command

1. Training and Qualification Weaknesses

The expectation from question #1 was to receive responses that provide clear direction of where fundamental problems within the training and qualification programs exist. With these weaknesses identified a prospective training or qualification program could be developed that avoid these sort of weaknesses. The specific question was:

Question #1: What are the current training or qualification weaknesses that you perceive in the 1102 contract specialist community?

a. Responses:

(1) GS-7:

Training:

Responses among this group ranged from those who have not experienced any training to those who felt there were some significant problems. Generally speaking there was a desire among this group to receive specific training on issues that are of immediate concern to the intern. The 7s were basically looking for training from the supervisor when they are assigned projects. They wanted specific direction on specific issues and a trial period with practical experience. As one stated, "they [interns] were assigning them a task or project without it being explained properly at the beginning." Five of the thirteen echoed this response in some manner.

Another concern was with job rotation and exposure to new and different types of work. They recognized the benefits of a variety of work experiences and exposure to new supervisors. They also expressed concern that they receive conflicting answers when they go to higher levels.

Four of the thirteen respondents have not received the Contracting Fundamentals course (CON 101). This appeared to be a contentious issue with those who have not received this course. In some cases at least part of the blame was placed on the command as it was perceived as a lack of commitment to the professional development of these individuals.

There was one comment that the heavy workload puts pressure on the intern. This pressure translates into incomplete research by the interns when attempting to find solutions to contracting problems. Finally, there was one comment on the need for computer skills training in new software programs.

Qualification:

The responses concerning the qualification program were largely irrelevant to the true aim of the question which was to establish an in-house qualification program. This was not the fault of the respondents who took the question in the context of the DAWIA program. This was the case for all responses in this category and therefore the responses will not be addressed for any pay grade.

(2) GS-9:

Training:

This group generally responded that the training was either too basic or overwhelming depending on the experience level of the intern. Another comment stated that there appeared to be no agenda for the training and that it was largely random. None of the 9s commented on the OJT specifically.

(3) GS-11:

Training:

Recognized the importance of OJT but cited a lack of one-on-one training or a perception that supervisors do not possess sufficient management skills to deliver this type of training. The 11s mentioned the difficulty of passing a tremendous amount of information coupled with the constant policy changes inherent to the business.

Several GS-11s commented on the DAWIA classes. They were generally not impressed with the content of these courses and felt them to be too basic. While DAWIA courses are outside the scope of this research, it is worth noting that there is general dissatisfaction with these courses.

(4) GS-12:

Training:

As a group they were generally concerned with management

development type courses as opposed to functional development. This would be consistent with a person looking to move up into management, who already possesses a good grasp of the contracting process. There were also concerns for training that focused on updating contracting specialists after new regulations were implemented. Again, this desire for executive level training is consistent with what a seasoned contract specialist would desire.

One mentioned that training comes too late in the process. This person went on to say that contracting is common sense and judgment, which is best gained through experience.

b. Analysis

Generally speaking the 7s and 9s had reservations concerning specific training on contract issues and the more senior 1102s were concerned with training in management skills and keeping up to date on new rules and regulations.

The first issue this analysis will address is the type of training these 1102s are requesting. Based on the responses the 1102s can be broken into two groups. The first group is junior 1102s (7s and 9s) which, for this research, will be considered novices. The second group is the senior 1102s (11s and 12s) who are making the transition to becoming DAWIA level III qualified or experts in the field of contracting. The one Lieutenant was grouped with the junior 1102s because the

researcher felt the training need more closely approximated the 9s. The training needs of a novice are very different from those of individuals approaching the expert level. The novices' requirements are for specific problem solving training and the expert focus is general problem solving training. A distinction must be made between specific problem solving and general problem solving and this is done very eloquently by Mr. Gordon Campbell of the Army Logistics Management College:[Ref 4, p. 4]

Whereas specific problem solving which is usually the application of a specific rule, formulae, etc. in a specific circumstance, general problem solving entails the ability or skill to recognize, assimilate, sort, and weight multivariant and sometimes conflicting information to resolve conflicts in which no specific rules exist. Decision making and subsequent action in this environment requires *reasoning* as opposed to action based on *a reason* (i.e. just following the rule). General/Specific problem solving also require *reasoning* to predict the general consequences and implications of any given specific decision made for *a specific reason*. The difference between a novice's approach to problem solving (for us, DoD Level I & II) and that of an expert (DoD Level III certified).

Accepting these definitions, the focus on the training program should be that of providing specific problem solving training to the junior 1102s and general problem solving training to the senior 1102s. There are no absolutes to this focus because there will be cases where the senior people need and will want specific problem solving training just as there will be cases where general problem solving training is

appropriate to the junior people. Ultimately the training program, especially OJT, must be tailored to the individual to maximize the benefit to that individual.

One general group of responses centered on the issue of whether the focus of training should be on broad topics as opposed to specific topics. This group felt the broad topics were too general and therefore less relevant than topics that could be put to use immediately. This is a classic dilemma of any local training program. The real issue is getting the training to the individuals when they need it, which is when training is most valuable to both the individual and the organization. As stated by one consultant on the subject: "Training succeeds when participants need it, know they need it and believe it will work. In other words, the training solution must be a direct response to an organization's specific problem or need." [Ref 5, p. 18] This article went on to say that information overload will make poor performance poorer. The key is to give trainees only what they absolutely need to know, when they need it to perform their jobs successfully. This does not mean that group training is not appropriate. It does lead to the conclusion that small groups consisting of individuals with similar backgrounds is the right approach as a complement to closely supervised OJT.

One respondent stated that one-on-one training from the branch heads was "at times nonexistent." Another suggested that they should conduct training when they assign new tasks.

The major focus of OJT is to get training to the individual as they need it. An important benefit is that the intern learns to do things just the way the boss wants them done. In addition he will learn to meet the expectations of his supervisor and the supervisor will easily recognize the advantage of this.

This concept of "Just in Time Training" is used effectively at the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company where "Life-spanning" education and training has been an integral part of the firm's culture. According to their director of human resources, Mr. Les Hemmings, Just in Time Training is used to provide employees assigned to a new project with the skills to implement and manage issues specific to that project. At John Hancock the Just in Time Training are one of many programs that are available as part of their training and education program. Within the management ranks there are similarities between the 1102s at FISC Det Washington and the employees at John Hancock where both organizations recruit highly qualified employees and must ensure their technical skills are state-of-the-art.[Ref 9, p. 15]

The problem of timely receipt of the Contracting Fundamentals course, CON 101, was a significant concern for those who have not yet taken it. An analysis of this problem showed that there was some disparity between a "Mechanicsburg" intern (those interns recruited and brought in under the

national program) and the "FISC" intern (those hired at the local level) as to when the intern received a quota for the CON 101 course. The Mechanicsburg interns received a quota for these schools in a relatively timely manner while the FISC interns sometimes had to wait ten months or longer for a CON 101 quota. The CON 101 course encompasses the entire contracting process from receipt of a purchase request through contract completion and contract closeout. The course is designed for students new to the contracting workforce either as entry-level or crossovers from other career fields.[Ref 7, p. 48] It seems intuitively obvious that a contract fundamentals course, required of all 1102s, should be taken by interns at approximately the same time. Proper research protocol does not permit the researcher to make this leap of faith, therefore a search of the literature is required. A study published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* looked at the effectiveness of cross-cultural management training of 65 U.S. Government employees. Participants who received a combination of training in various disciplines displayed significantly higher performance on a role play task than those in the no-training control group.[Ref 10, p. 952] This study seems to lend credibility to the belief that the contracting fundamentals course, CON 101, should be taken by all 1102s at approximately the same time and that a delay of one year seems excessive and counterproductive to the organization.

As for the optimal time to take CON 101, the consensus among the supervisors and many interns the researcher spoke with was that this should occur between three and six months after reporting aboard. It was felt that the intern would have sufficient time to become acclimated to the contracting world to make the course relevant, and yet not have so much experience as to make the course redundant. The DAU course catalog states that they design this course for students new to the contracting workforce, however, it does not provide any recommendations when a prospective student should take the course.

2. Training needs

A question regarding what the interns themselves thought their training needs are was considered essential to this research. It was anticipated that by having the interns identify what was important to them, and building the training program with that in mind, the program would have broad support from the users. The specific question was:

Question #2: What do you see as the specific training needs of mid-career or intern contract specialists personnel?

a. Responses

(1) GS-7

A common theme among this group was the desire for specific guidance from their supervisors at the time the

interns need it. They stressed proactive training versus reactive and wanted training at the beginning of a project vice someone who simply "grades" their work. They are looking for more hands on review of work being done. As one intern stated: "[To satisfy the] training needs of an intern requires a close working relationship with their branch head. This training should be proactive versus reactive to ensure that when a new employee begins a new task, he or she knows the steps that need to be taken to successfully complete their task."

There was a concern about equity in training. It appears there is the perception that the quality of the training varies from branch to branch. If you are fortunate enough to be assigned to a branch head who is a good trainer, you are ahead of your contemporaries. One respondent said: "[You need to] know the basics of what is going on. Knowledge at this command is very uneven. One [training] philosophy prevails in one branch while another prevails in another."

Finally one intern said: "The specific training needs are that of learning the general process of developing a contract. As one masters that, the training needs become that of gaining the wisdom (through practice perhaps) that most specialists who have been doing this work for many years possess."

(2) GS-9

The GS-9s focused on the need for training in specific

contracting competencies such as cost analysis, cost realism and negotiation techniques. There is a concern that a good deal of the training they receive is not pertinent to their positions. One intern said: "A lot of the training programs focus on providing information at such a basic level that it's worthless, [or it is] on topics that do not have relevance to our positions."

In addition to specifics on contracting competencies they are looking for training in policy and regulation. As stated by one respondent: "Mid-career interns need more specific and in-depth discussion of certain issues/topics which may be pertinent to their work, such as awareness of various policies which may affect their work."

Finally they are looking for experience in a wide range of contracting situations. As one stated: "Exploring ... getting experience in various types of contracts (Firm Fixed Price (FFP), Cost type, Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ), Letter, Requirements etc.)." This is consistent with a group making the transition from basic contracting knowledge to more in-depth knowledge.

(3) GS-11

They are looking for more specialization in contracts. They are interested in legal issues and the intricacies of complicated issues such as Federal Information Processing (FIP) procurements. They are also looking at training in

things "outside the lifelines" such as field trips to Defense Contract Management Area Office (DCMAO), Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA), and Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) offices. Some specific competencies mentioned were: Cradle to grave best value, Cost Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF), Services contracting, negotiations, determining objectives for negotiations (how to analyze proposals), communications type training, cost analysis, cost realism and public policy training.

They stated that the training should be applicable and focused on individuals' experience level. In addition, as one said: "The most important thing is a supervisor who has the time to help you. OJT is fundamental. Secondly, good written resources are of tremendous help in OJT." This person was looking for a desk reference manual.

(4) GS-12

This group was also looking "outside the office" for such things as executive level training to prepare them for supervisory positions. In addition they would like training Regarding DCAA, DFAS, and contractor concerns. They are looking to take that next step. As one respondent stated: "Once a contracting specialist reaches mid-career or the end of the intern program, there are no formal guidelines as to which classes should be taken in order for the person to become qualified for a contracting officer position."

They were also looking for efficient ways to stay up to date on the latest changes without having to spend two weeks at a school.

b. Analysis

The first issue that will be addressed concerns equity in training and the perception that the quality of the training varies from branch to branch. This issue gets to a very important aspect of OJT, that issue being the ability of the supervisor to impart knowledge as the trainee needs it. This was touched on in the analysis of question 1 with the discussion of Just in Time Training, but it goes further. The ability to impart knowledge goes beyond the contracting competency level of the supervisor and the ability to communicate really gets to the heart of being a good leader or manager. The supervisor is assumed to be proficient in the rules and regulations of contracting. Therefore, it is their development as a trainer that will pay significant dividends as an investment in the future. The concept of "train the trainer", where they invest resources in those personnel whom they will then expect to instruct other workers is appropriate in this setting.

A benefit to using technically competent line supervisors as trainers ensures that the technical training does not turn into irrelevant education.[Ref 6, p. 5] The intern is receiving training for a specific task at the time he or she

needs it.

One technique that is in favor with the training community is a practice-oriented "do-and-debrief" approach as opposed to the old "tell-show-and-do" model. The old system had the instructor explain the process and the student was expected to perform the task as demonstrated. In the new system:[Ref 5, p. 18]

Putting the emphasis on doing takes the burden of responsibility for learning off the learner. In addition to stressing hands-on learning, the do-and-debrief method provides an opportunity for ongoing discussion, both during and after practice. The burden of making learning work is on the instructor, whose job isn't to talk but to watch learner performance and help learners understand training points.

The researcher takes exception to the first sentence about taking the responsibility for learning off the intern. Clearly there is a significant responsibility for the intern to learn and within the context that this was taken, that was the intent. The passage does have validity as it addresses the need for the supervisor to help the intern understand training points. This addresses the desire of the GS-7s to have their work reviewed as it is progressing. The feedback between the supervisor and intern should be to clear up specific issues, but on a larger scale, it should be to check the learning progress of the intern.

A word of caution is in order because simply training the supervisors on how to be a better trainer will not solve this problem completely. The essence of this problem is how

supervisors deal with subordinates with respect to job assignments and directing the intern's work, which will have a major impact on the perception the intern has of the training he or she is receiving. Some people have a talent for clear explanation (which can be improve through training) and a keen sense of when a person does not understand a key concept and how to help that person comprehend the issues. The essential aspects of management and leadership are interwoven in an OJT program and one cannot talk about improving the former without mentioning the latter. That said, it is beyond the scope of this research to deal with in-depth management and leadership issues.

The GS-9s focused on contracting competencies such as cost analysis, cost realism and negotiation techniques. A good definition of competency, for the purpose of this research, is: "the union of knowledge and skill, of idea and attitude." [Ref 11, p. 8] This definition brings to light the complexity involved with becoming competent in any profession and is particularly appropriate for the contracting profession. The development of these competencies will lead to improved quality and efficiency and should be the major focus of this training program.

In addition, the GS-9s were making the transition from learning the "how to" to the "why" of the contracting profession. This is consistent with their stage in career progression. Here the supervisor must take the additional

time to provide a more in-depth explanation of the contracting situations with which these people are dealing.

There was a general concern for rules and regulation updating among the 9s, 11s and 12s. They were looking for an efficient way to keep up-to-date without going to a lengthy school. Because these rule changes affect everyone, conducting some of this training in larger groups would be appropriate. Not letting the groups become too large is important in order to allow for discussions. The benefit to the group discussion is that they give everyone the command's interpretation of the rule's impact in an efficient manner and there is an opportunity to clear up disagreements or misunderstandings.

Several responses mentioned the need to have good written resources within arms reach. They were looking for a resource that will provide clear direction on how to do things and answer specific questions. This resource, an operating manual for the contract specialist, would allow the individual more independence by not having to ask the supervisor questions. This would free up both the supervisor and the intern's time. One difficulty will be the resource requirements for developing it and maintaining the guide through periodic updates. This guide would be more feasible on simpler type of contract issues or those which are done frequently at the command. An example of a topic that might be appropriate is Justification and Approval (J&As). The development of this

type of resource would require extensive management review because it would quickly become "the gospel" to the workers.

It is evident that the idea of a continuum of training is emerging from the responses. The basic training that a GS-7 desires and is relevant to their world is quite different from the training requirements of a GS-12, not only in content but in delivery. The one common theme, however, is the desire to be given some direction and training prior to the start of a task.

3. Formal Training Received

The purpose of this question was to develop a picture of where this command is with respect to the level of formal training. In order to develop a training program that reduces redundancy and yet is comprehensive you must have an appreciation for what the interns have already accomplished. The specific question was:

Question #3: What formal contracting training have you attended? NOTE: The contracting courses that are available through DAU, according to the 1996 catalog, are as follows:

CON 101	Contracting Fundamentals
CON 102	Operational Level Contracting Fundamentals
CON 103	Facilities Contracting Fundamentals
CON 104	Contract Pricing
CON 105	Operational Level Contract Pricing
CON 106	Facilities Contract Pricing
CON 201	Government Contract Law
CON 211	Intermediate Contracting
CON 221	Intermediate Contract Administration
CON 222	Operational Level Contract Administration

CON 223 Intermediate Facilities Contract Management
CON 231 Intermediate Contract Pricing
CON 232 Overhead Management for Defense
CON 233 Cost Accounting Standards Workshop
CON 241 Information Technology Contracting
CON 301 Executive Contracting
CON 331 Executive Cost and Price Analysis
CON 333 Management for Contracting Executives

a. Responses

(1) GS-7

The responses ranged from none to quite an extensive list of courses. Nine of the interns have attended the fundamentals course, CON 101, four have not. As one intern who has not received the basic course said: "I have not attended CON 101; I have been here eight months. I am concerned that it will affect my career growth." Another stated that he has been aboard nine months and does not expect to get the basic course for another four to five months.

(2) GS-9

All four have completed CON-101 and CON 104 as a minimum. Others have attended PUR 101-Small purchase, and CON-201.

(3) GS-11

The 11s have completed CON-101 and CON-104 and in addition some have received: 211, 231, a negotiation workshop, and a GSA sponsored best value course.

(4) GS-12

The 12s have completed many courses mentioned above with the following additions: Quantitative methods QMT-345, Advanced administration, Advanced legal issues, Source selection - best value, Construction mods, A&E, facilities, Advanced construction.

b. Analysis

The one surprising aspect was the delay some interns experienced in attending the basic CON 101 course and that it was apparently not an isolated instance. It seemed to the researcher unusual that an intern could be at a command as long as one year without going to the basic course. The obvious dissatisfaction this would cause would not be confined to the individual, but would be a message heard by the other interns about the command's commitment to training. The researcher, having spent approximately three weeks at this command, is certain that FISC Det Washington, is not sending a message of apathy to the interns with respect to training. The opposite appears, by virtue of sponsoring this thesis, among many other actions, that they are very committed to the training of their interns and contract specialists. The command appears to be working the quota issue to bring the problem of these delays under control. The reader is asked to refer to question 1 for further analysis on this delay and the timing of when to take CON 101.

It appears that having some measure of immediate semi-

formal training an intern could receive before attending the fundamentals course (CON 101) would be beneficial, especially if the intern is going to be delayed a substantial amount of time. This training would not be a substitute for CON 101, since this course is required for DAWIA level I certification.

4. Description of in-house training

The purpose of this question was to gain information on the command's training program from the recipients. It was expected that they would bring out both strong and weak points. It should be noted that several months prior to this survey, the command changed the focus of their training program from one where all 1102s received the same training at the same time, to one consisting of smaller groups of similar pay grades receiving training tailored to their knowledge level and experience. Under the new system, GS-7s and 9s were trained as a group and GS-11s and 12s were another group. For the purposes of description and analysis those responses critical of the previous system of training will not be addressed. The specific question was:

Question #4: Describe your in-house training program.

a. Responses

(1) GS-7

The responses ranged from a description of a robust,

relevant and highly beneficial training program to one that is "sporadic, unorganized and ineffective." Speaking to the change in format one respondent stated;

[The] in-house training has improved. Now they have in-house training for GS-7s in which the division director meets with the interns and can give a better and more thorough explanation of the subject matter.

One concern was the lack of time to participate in meaningful training due to the heavy workload. As stated by one intern:

The in-house training program has much potential because it is a highly supportive effort. However, the high work load given to interns sometimes diminishes the training experience due to [the] lack of opportunity to fully participate "mentally".

One individual describes the training program in this manner:

The training offered every month by the division directors has been very beneficial and helpful in my daily duties. I would like to see it continue, and perhaps increase to address more specific topics, however, at a micro level - branch heads need to fill in the gaps where appropriate.

This speaks to the desire for a training program that teaches topics that may not be needed immediately, but is still relevant to their development.

(2) GS-9

The range of comments were equally diverse as with the 7s. One commented: "Our in-house training program consists of

sporadic events that do not appear to have any connection, with uneven quality of information." While another described it as:

[The] in-house [training program] entails a wide range of topics from equitable adjustment to how to write a Business Clearance Memorandum (BCM). In-house training was also used to provide information on latest developments such as FASA. It's good."

In addition they mentioned that they conducted training via "cc mail" (the command's LAN E-mail system) and the Internet on topics such as local policy changes as well as DON and DoD wide changes.

(3) GS-11

They described a training program that to some lacked value but was focused on the day-to-day OJT with the quality varying depending upon the supervisor. One felt that the only structured and recurring training was on "ethics" which was delivered with legal personnel.

(4) GS-12

Again the range was from good to somewhat inadequate. One described it as "Informal lectures by branch heads, legal staff, or division directors regarding areas of interest or areas that the speaker specializes in."

b. Analysis

One of the concerns was the lack of time to participate in meaningful training due to the heavy workload. This theme was apparent throughout the responses. One fundamental aspect of this training program, which will not and cannot be answered by this research, is how much time an intern, contract specialist or supervisor is willing to spend on their professional development outside normal working hours. It is unrealistic to expect that two workers, one that puts in extra hours on professional development and one that attempts to work on their development strictly during "working hours" will be at the same proficiently level after a given amount of time. It is also unrealistic that a command could dictate (given Government work regulations) that an employee work on professional development on their own time. At FISC Det Washington, they make the opportunity available for those employees who wish to engage in professional development outside working hours to do so and many interns do just that. The researcher believes that this is the appropriate and responsible approach to take.

Respondents brought up the issue of workload pressure causing training to be delayed. This was a recurring theme and one with which the researcher has first hand experience in the Navy. Within any organization there will always be competition for the worker's time between training and production. It is also intuitive that there is an optimal

amount of training that will maximize the benefit to the organization. Clearly, in the long run, no training is just as bad as training exclusively at the expense of production, therefore there should be an optimal mix of time spent on training to maximize the benefit to the organization. Unfortunately, finding this optimal mix would be a very complex optimization problem with a large number of variables and is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, this thesis will attempt to make a reasonable approximation that will give FISC Det Washington a good start on finding this optimal mix.

The responses show a wide disparity of opinion concerning the effectiveness of the training program. This seems to indicate some dissatisfaction with the program and therefore room for improvement.

5. Who should conduct training?

This question was included to examine what the people receiving the training felt about who should be delivering the training. The assumption of the researcher at the beginning of this study was that the supervisors should be conducting the bulk of OJT training. The specific question was:

Question # 5: Who should conduct training? Figure 3 provides a depiction of the responses.

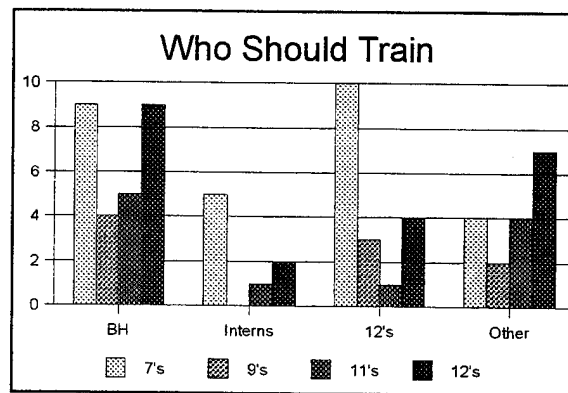


Figure 3: Recommended Trainers
 Note: Multiple votes allowed;
 BH=Branch head

a. Responses

(1) GS-7

They were almost evenly split between having branch heads (supervisors) and GS-12s conduct the training, with a good percentage, 50%, feeling that other interns could conduct the training. Some comments reflected the frustration that the branch heads simply do not have the time and that they do not seem to enjoy doing the training anyway. The sentiment seemed to be that the correct person is the one who is knowledgeable in the subject, is motivated to conduct training and can explain things at a basic level. With the exception of the level at which training is conducted, this is probably a good mix of attributes for any training program. These were the results:

Branch Heads 9, Interns 5, GS-12s 10, Other:
Division Directors 2, Subject Matter Expert 2

(2) GS-9

There were no comments from the 9s. These were the results:

Branch Heads 4, Interns 0, GS-12s 3, Other:
Division Directors 1, Budget people 1

(3) GS-11

This group was divided between those who felt that it should not be grade specific and those who felt it should be senior personnel. As one stated: "People who are knowledgeable and skilled at training whether they are branch heads, senior specialists or interns. If they like to train then let them, if they don't then don't make them." Another person felt differently and stated "If not a branch head, then those above (not below) branch head." These were the results:

Branch Heads 5, Interns 1, GS-12s 1, Other:
Subject Matter Expert 1, Division Director 2,
DCMAO, DCAA, DFAS 1

(4) GS-12

These interviewees felt that branch heads or division directors should be conducting the training. In fact when you combine the GS-11s and 12s they felt that branch heads or

division directors should be conducting the training rather than other 12s by almost a four to one ratio (19 to 5). One suggestion was to have outside people in related fields conducting training on contracting specific issues, however, they should review these lessons at the appropriate level to ensure they are consistent with the policy and procedures at FISC Det Washington. In addition there was a suggestion that GS-12s would conduct it in working groups with case study format. These were the results:

Branch Heads 9, Interns 2, GS-12s 4, Other:
Subject Matter Experts 1, Division Directors 3,
Outside people 3,

b. Analysis

After reviewing the results and spending time at the command the assumption of the researcher that supervisors should conduct all the training was not necessarily correct and that a mix is probably more appropriate.

It is intuitive that the GS-7s and 9s could benefit from the experience of the 11s and 12s who have participated in or completed the internship program. The helpful tips and experiences of these people are still fresh in their minds, giving these prospective trainers some empathy for the struggles of the new interns. In turn the experience of training the GS-7s and 9s would be beneficial to the managerial and leadership growth of the 11s and 12s.

The GS-11s and 12s have different training goals, as discussed in analysis of question 2, that goal being managerial development. It is certainly more appropriate for this type of training to be conducted by branch heads and division directors. This is consistent with their desire for training on subjects such as executive development issues. It would not be inappropriate, however, to have subject matter experts conduct training in their area of expertise even if this meant a junior person was conducting the training.

As a supervisor there is no getting around the requirement to conduct OJT with your subordinates. It is the more formal training that is conducted in group sessions that was the aim of this question. In this setting, it should be those who want to do the training and are qualified that should be taking the lead. There should be no reason that a knowledgeable 11 or 12 cannot lead a training session, especially if it is for 7s and 9s. The burden of review as far as content should still be conducted by management to ensure the material is up to date and correct.

6. Adequacy of training program

The purpose of this question was to solicit responses that would illustrate how far the program goes in satisfying the needs of the interns. Given the interns' view of the adequacy of the program, the researcher can attempt to fill in

the gaps.

The question on the qualification program should be disregarded because there was no qualification program (DAWIA was not the intention of this question) in place at FISC. One of the goals of this research is to put together a qualification program, therefore the responses will be analyzed where they can shed light on what to include in a program or to avoid. The specific question was:

Question # 6: Is your local command in-house program adequate? How would you like to see it changed including specific ways to improve it? Figures 4 and 5 provides a depiction of the responses.

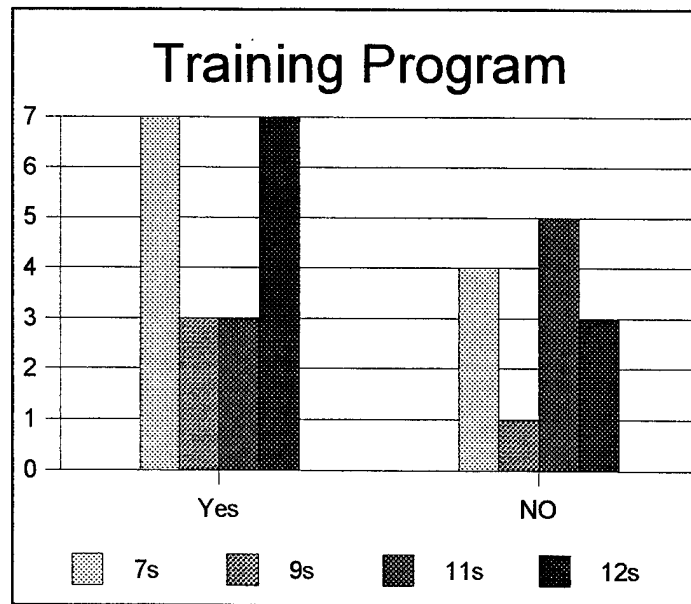


Figure 4: Training

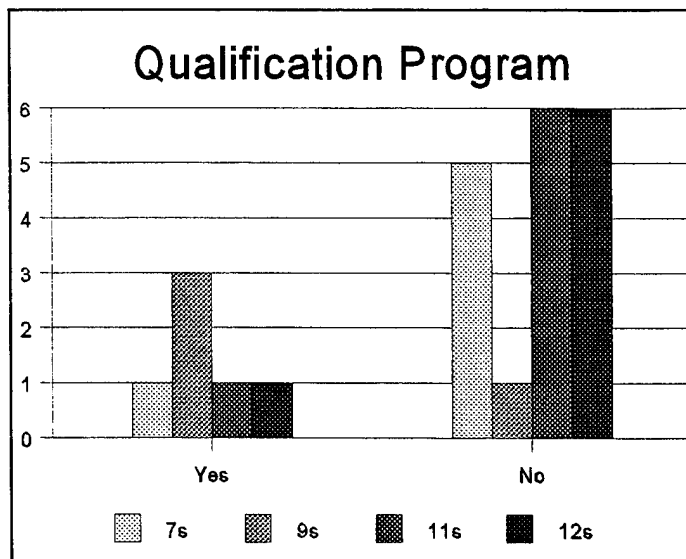


Figure 5: Qualification

<u>Training</u>			<u>Qualification</u>	
Yes <u>7</u> , No <u>4</u>		GS-07	Yes <u>1</u> , No <u>5</u>	
Yes <u>3</u> , No <u>1</u>		GS-09	Yes <u>3</u> , No <u>1</u>	
Yes <u>3</u> , No <u>5</u>		GS-11	Yes <u>1</u> , No <u>6</u>	
Yes <u>7</u> , No <u>3</u>		GS-12	Yes <u>1</u> , No <u>6</u>	
Yes <u>20</u> , No <u>13</u>		Total	Yes <u>6</u> , No <u>18</u>	
60%	40%	Percentage	25%	75%

a. Responses

(1) GS-7

Training:

The majority felt the training program was adequate. Included in the responses were some solid recommendations on how to improve the program. The theme of the recommendations

is to have a program that is well-structured, has logical sequencing of topics, and is conducted in small size groups with individuals of a similar knowledge level. In addition, the one-on-one training should be conducted when they assign new tasks. One intern asked for more formal computer training.

One respondent mentioned that the program has changed for the better, stating:

It has changed. The division directors now give training to GS-7s on specific topics they feel are important to us. The setting is smaller and interns can ask a lot more questions without feeling intimidated by the GS-11s, 12s and branch heads.

One intern got to the heart of the problem stating:

That's a tough question because you don't want to have too much training or else the work will not be done. The key is effective training. The lawyers do the best job out of anyone in providing excellent training! IDEA: KOs should set aside specific times during the day when they can train a new intern without interruption.

Another brought up the problem of work versus training by stating:

I keep focusing in on work load. The variety of work and case complexity is not a problem, it is actually a great benefit. However, I feel I miss out of some pertinent and important foundation knowledge because I'm over extended at times. Perhaps an improvement would be a better balance of scheduled work and scheduled training times.

Getting to the question of training when they assign work, one intern suggested that:

At the branch head level, I would like to see a policy implemented where if a 1102 is to begin a

procurement type which they have never done before, the branch head would sit down with that individual and cover the high points, process, and trouble spots to watch out for, instead of training after the fact when the 1102 submits his or her work.

One intern brought up key issues of information sharing and making the training fun. Stating:

Continue to make training fun and informative. Breaking into smaller groups makes it less formal and intimidating. Encourage the atmosphere of trust and helping each other which is good at FISC. Leadership should encourage people to share information also. Have a suggestion box for training ideas and needs. Get everyone involved in recruiting speakers and organizing training.

Qualification:

There were few comments in response to this question, but one theme was to assist FISC interns in receiving necessary classes. Also, continually review level of work being done and increase the complexity as the interns progress.

(2) GS-9

Training:

The concerns and recommendations of these individuals were similar to those of the 7s in that the training program should consist of set topics that each person should receive at different points of his or her career. In addition the training topics should be consistent with the person's grade level (7s & 9s together). Finally as one stated: "Whoever is giving it should cut right to the chase and tell us how this command wants something done." This comment is speaking to

the desire to know the command "philosophy" on various contracting issues.

Qualification:

Again the comments echoed those of the 7s, as one stated: "Someone's level of responsibility should increase with the level of experience." They are looking for the qualification program to be progressive and take into account the individual's talents and efforts at improvement.

(3) GS-11

Training:

The majority felt the training program was not adequate. One provided some excellent input including the suggestion that they should train the branch heads and senior specialists in how to give OJT. Again this gets back to the "train the trainers" concept mentioned previously. Another suggestion was to discuss the "whys" and cause and effect. The theme of these suggestions was that training should be more case study and discussion rather than presentation. They mentioned that they should make assignments prior to training and the training session should be devoted to discussion.

One particularly comprehensive opinion offered the following ten recommendations and suggestions:

1. Allow people who enjoy training and are knowledgeable to present training.
2. Don't force anyone to present training.

3. Focus on creating a desk-guide resource.
4. Train branch heads, and Senior specialists to give OJT to interns.
5. Make allowances for those people who do training - don't expect their work output to be the same.
6. Allow Senior specialists to do more OJT, or give them warrants so they can free up some of the branch head's time.
7. Don't send people to training (formal) who don't need it.
8. Provide more introductory training for new interns.
9. Encourage trainers to prepare well by giving support, bonuses.
10. Provide up-front OJT experiences expected in normal career progression. Look out for the interns to help them.

Other suggestions were to tie it to the work done and integrate it into a larger training program, use video tapes, place current training packages on the LAN and more hands on group exercises.

Qualification:

Understandably the 11s were more interested in a qualification program than were the 7s and 9s because it is more relevant to them at this point in their career. They were looking for "some type of guideline or path that defines what type of contract actions one should be exposed to in

order to be proficient at the 13 level."

Others were looking at the qualification program as a means and a path to a warrant. As one stated "We should allow 12s and possibly 11s to have limited warrants and to mentor under their current branch heads as contracting officers in training. It would be nice to set up a contracting officer training package to give written guidance to newly warranted contracting officers."

(4) GS-12

Training:

This group was looking for a program that would allow them to take executive courses to qualify for the next level of their career. In addition, they wanted to bring in guest speakers and different viewpoints from support agencies to provide training.

At least one respondent felt that training should be more inclusive of other series. "I would like to see more 1105s and 1106s attend some training given to 1102s." This presumably would be for areas that cut across the series boundaries.

Planning was also important "[have an] advance schedule to allow for planning, many times we are called [for training at the] last minute, we might have critical work [pending] resulting in a lack of focus and minimal preparation."

They also mentioned the idea of a transition training program from journeymen to manager.

Qualification:

There was a great deal of interest in a qualification program as showed by the comments. The assumption was that this qualification program would ultimately lead to a warrant. They are looking for a definitive path to qualify for a warrant. As one respondent stated:

Provide a formal program for qualifying - currently a GS-12 only receives more responsibility for complexity of work. There should be more management responsibility delegated, for example training on being an acting branch head, or being an assistant branch head with management responsibility.

Another suggestion was to "Empower senior 12s and branch heads to handle day-to-day operations. Eliminate the 14s oversight. Downgrade the 14s and 13s and let them be first line supervisors." The assumption was that by pushing management responsibility down the line, the contracting warrant would stay with that responsibility.

b. Analysis

Many of these topics and suggestions have already been covered in the analysis of other questions. The junior interns would like to have things explained before embarking on a new task, rather than having to figure out an assignment and decide what questions need to be asked. This gets into the philosophy of how you approach the individual and the task. One school of thought is that these people are college graduates with at least a 3.5 GPA or higher. They should be

able to work independently and using initiative figure out what they need to know. The other school of thought is that if it takes them one or two hours to figure out what a supervisor could tell them in five minutes, is this a wise use of time? The answer of course is that it depends on the task. If during that two hours the intern not only learned the answer but the process of how to find future answers quickly and accurately, then most would agree that this was a good use of time. If, however, the intern, merely got some information that is of a one time value, then having gotten that from the supervisor would have been better. The key is for the supervisor and the intern to understand the task at hand and the relevance that it has to the intern's professional development. This of course is not an easy task.

They mentioned the idea of a transition from journeyman training to management training. Preparing the senior specialists for the next level of their career is appropriate at this level and this should be the goal of any training or qualification program. Much of the focus of the analysis to this point has been how to most efficiently do this.

It is apparent that different pay grades have different needs and desires for a training program. The needs of the 7s in terms of training content are very different from those of the 11s and 12s. However, the delivery of the training in terms of making it interesting, coherent and logical is the same for all pay grades.

7. Career progression

The researcher expected to find that respondents would universally believe that they linked career progression to a successful training and qualification program. The number of no responses was a surprise to the researcher. Some responses indicated that contracting was learning through experience, inferring that training had little to do with a person's development as a successful contract specialist. This, of course, was contrary to the belief held by the researcher that training does have value added to the organization. The specific question was:

Question # 7: Do you feel career progression suffers as a result of training or qualification inadequacies? Figures 6 and 7 provide a depiction of the results.

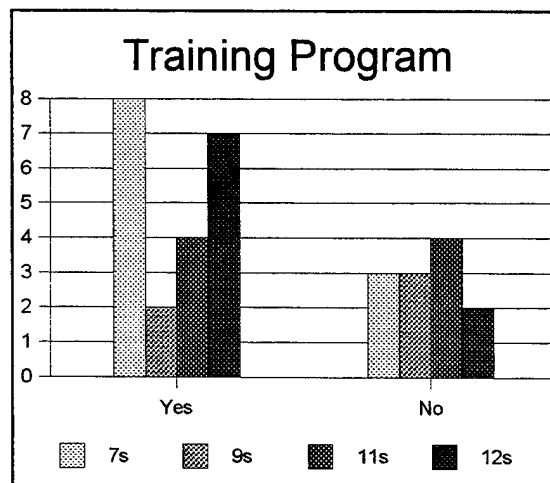


Figure 6: Training

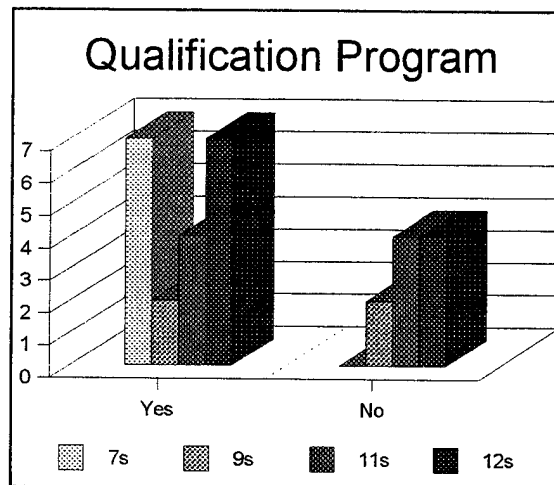


Figure 7: Qualification Program

Training

Qualification

Yes <u>8</u> , No <u>3</u>	<u>GS-07</u>	Yes <u>7</u> , No <u>0</u>
No response <u>2</u>		No response <u>6</u>
Yes <u>2</u> , No <u>3</u>	<u>GS-09</u>	Yes <u>2</u> , No <u>2</u>
		No response <u>1</u>
Yes <u>4</u> , No <u>4</u>	<u>GS-11</u>	Yes <u>4</u> , No <u>4</u>
Yes <u>7</u> , No <u>2</u>	<u>GS-12</u>	Yes <u>7</u> , No <u>2</u>

a. Responses

(1) GS-7

Most felt that career progression does suffer, however one stated that "contracting is really learning through experience". Other thoughts were that job rotation and job assignments and the luck of the draw (in terms of whom your supervisor is) has more to do with your success than a training program.

(2) GS-9

A surprising majority felt that career progression does not suffer, however those who provided comments did not agree. As one stated "Yes it would. I think ultimately the type of work you are assigned determines the quality of career progression."

One indicated that "The command may suffer in the area of productivity due to your absence, however, the "command" makes up for your loss by a coordinated "team effort"."

(3) GS-11

This group was evenly divided. One stated that "Career progression is based on performance. Having good supervisors has helped me" inferring that the training program has little relevance. Another stated that "I believe that people are being promoted whether they are ready or not." This person was implying that your success is not dependent on your knowledge.

(4) GS-12

This group felt strongly that problems with a training and qualification program can hurt. Of those who commented, however, the feeling was that there was not a strong tie. Two comments were "As an intern you are promoted regardless." Another stated "You progress based many times due to your product and work ethic." These comments seem to state on the

one hand you will be promoted based on time in grade and on the other hand your personal commitment to your job can overcome training deficiencies.

b. Analysis

It was interesting to note the number of respondents who felt that training did not matter. It was assumed going into this research that virtually everyone would have thought it had a significant impact. The comment that contracting was really learning through experience was inferring that a training program has little impact

The theme that one can succeed through hard work and dedication will not be disputed by the researcher. The question did not get at the fundamental question of how much does a successful training program contribute to the overall success of the organization. It was agreed by most respondents that it can have a beneficial impact on career development.

The promotion rate, especially for the interns, does happen pretty much on schedule despite the training program, however, the better you train these individuals as they move up the ranks, the better contracting officers they will ultimately become.

Analysis at the beginning of this chapter covers the other comments.

8. Frustrations with the program

This question was an attempt to identify specific problems that could be addressed in the proposed training program. The qualification program does not exist at FISC Det Washington and therefore the responses focused on the DAWIA qualification program which was not the focus of this study. The specific question was:

Question # 8: What are the top three most frustrating aspects with the current training and qualification program at your command?

a. Responses

(1) GS-7

Training:

The responses ranged from no opinion to some very specific opinions and recommendations. One respondent stated:

Not understanding the topic of training because you have not been introduced to the subject matter, or someone who knows the subject matter very well but cannot teach it. [They are] unable to relay information to students in a way that they would understand the subject matter.

They were also looking for relevance to their day-to-day activities. As one stated "Too much information at one time; Not enough practical training (too much theory); Subjects that are not relevant at the time." Others cited poor timeliness of contracting classes, that training should correlate with work load, lack of pro-active one-on-one instruction/training

from the contracting officer, and a lack of written established guidelines for easy review. This last item was speaking to the desire for a desk reference manual.

These interns also wanted the lecture format changed to more of a discussion format. There was a recommendation to have daily interaction with senior personnel in each branch other than the contracting officer. Lastly, one spoke of training ranking secondary in importance to getting work done and being forced to "learn by [the] process of "sink or swim" or "trial by fire".

Qualification:

The responses here were similar to question 1 with a few additions. One mentioned that "sometimes an intern receives too much similar type of requirements and this limits their ability to grow."

(2) GS-9

Training:

The answers again parallel question one with a few additions. One was that the training facility was inadequate, "...[it] makes you want to fall asleep."

Qualification:

One indicated they were unsure how to become a contracting officer. Another discussing the DAWIA courses, stated that "Information covered is too general and simplistic to really help on the job. This, can't be helped when you are

training the entire acquisition workforce. It is a systemic problem outside of the command."

(3) GS-11

Training:

The problems of schedule, quality, and the feeling that training is a waste of time were mentioned. In addition the frustration of "having to return to your desk from class due to workload rather than concentrating on class and the increased workload upon returning from training."

Qualification:

One indicated there was not enough potential for advancement and no limited warrants available at the command. In addition they stated "There are better paying, less stressful jobs elsewhere in this geographic area for 1102 positions." One was concerned about the "lack of input on contracting experience I can receive, along with arbitrary distribution of challenging work and arbitrary evaluations." While another stated "Some 1102s are given work way beyond their level of experience due to the severe personnel shortage."

(4) GS-12

Training:

As mentioned previously there was not enough training in preparation for management duties and lack of supervisory

experience in hands on training.

Qualification:

They were looking for a structure of formally increasing a person's responsibility and preparation for the next step. They were looking for empowerment and more management responsibility delegated to GS-12s.

b. Analysis

The analysis for this question is very similar to that of question one because the responses were so closely aligned. There was no new ground covered with this question and in hindsight the researcher would have left it out in favor of question one.

9. Best aspects of the program

The intention of this question was to gain some insight into what is successful and could be used in a proposed training program. The qualification portion was not relevant as discussed above. The responses were not as rich as others because the question was redundant and most of the positive things had already been presented in previous sections of the questionnaire. The specific question was:

Question # 9: What are the three best aspects of the current training and qualification program at your command?

a. Responses

(1) GS-7

Training:

Respondents liked the small sessions with the new interns which cover various topics as well as the one-on-one sessions with the branch heads. They also liked the idea of developing a relationship with the person doing the teaching. Some recognized the quality of the people doing the training, as one stated "[It's beneficial] having qualified people train you in a way that is easy to pick up."

Others cited the positive aspects of the program as "It is focused; It [The training] is deemed important; [the] interaction between senior and junior 1102s; [The] division director's role in training interns; [The] challenging work; [The] in-house supervisors are eager to teach; [that it] covers relevant topics; [The] written materials [that are] provided; Training appears to be a high priority; [There is a] lot of opportunity to be trained as far as number of training presentations scheduled; Management is helpful, supportive and sincere; Lots of up to date tools are provided in terms of resources and technology. Always changing and learning better ways to do things [the command is] receptive to change.

Qualification:

They indicated that the "Supervisors want you to achieve your next level and to achieve important contracting goals at

each level."

(2) GS-9

Training:

Some of the aspects mentioned here were that training was presented in a professional manner which allowed for question and answers; it was directed towards specific job related objectives; the large reference "library"; the Graduate school program and the E-mail system that allows dissemination of information on current changes.

(3) GS-11

Training:

The emphasis here was on the relevancy of the in-house training and on the quality of the handouts; the graduate education program; the diversity of training instructors, that rotating among branch heads is good.

Qualification:

No comments

(4) GS-12

Training:

The consensus here was that branch heads were qualified, knowledgeable trainers and the amount of in-house training received was adequate. In addition documentation that is passed out is helpful for reference purposes.

Qualification:

Some indicated there were opportunities to gain experience in supervising and they liked the fact they were allowed to help the junior specialists. One felt lucky to "work for a KO that spends time on my development."

b. Analysis

As mentioned above the responses were not that different from the responses received from question six. The analysis therefore is very similar and the reader is requested to refer back to that section of the chapter. These comments paint a picture of a command that is committed to a robust training program.

10. Command emphasis

The purpose of this question was not only to find where the emphasis was placed, but of equal importance was to solicit comments on how the interns felt concerning this emphasis. The vast majority of respondents (30 versus 2) indicated that the training program was emphasized more. This of course is not surprising because the command does not have a qualification program. Those that indicated a qualification program were referring to the DAWIA program. The specific question was:

Question # 10: Where does your command place more emphasis; on a training program or a qualification

program? Why? Figure 8 depicts the responses.

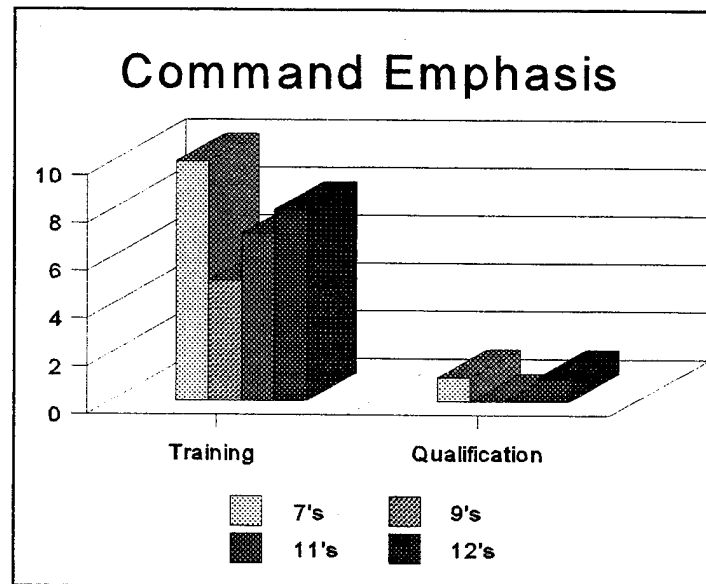


Figure 8: Emphasis

Training Program <u>10</u>	<u>GS-07</u>	Qualification Program <u>1</u>
Training Program <u>5</u>	<u>GS-09</u>	Qualification Program <u>0</u>
Training Program <u>7</u>	<u>GS-11</u>	Qualification Program <u>0</u>
Training Program <u>8</u>	<u>GS-12</u>	Qualification Program <u>1</u>

a. Responses

(1) GS-7

Most felt that training was emphasized more and that this was appropriate. As one stated "I suspect that if one is trained properly, then one can contribute to the work force more readily." Another stated "I believe they place more emphasis on a training program because a great majority of the

working personnel are contract specialist interns who need to be educated on the contracting process."

(2) GS-9

Some felt that training was not even significant to development as one stated "[I] think that people qualify to become KOs simply by their on the job performance."

(3) GS-11

Some were resigned that it did not really matter "because a lot of the management is firmly entrenched, there is very little amount of potential to move up." Others felt the qualification program was emphasized more because of DAWIA, as one stated "Mandatory training (DAWIA requirements) is the only area I've experienced any concern about or felt the command was concerned about."

(4) GS-12

One commented that "As a senior specialist, I have received outstanding training in the past from FISC Washington - I feel the difference [now] is that the branch heads currently just do not have the time." With respect to the qualification program one stated "A qualification program requires handing responsibility from the contracting officer to GS-12s, some of whom, management probably does not feel can handle it."

b. Analysis

As mentioned above it is not surprising that most people indicated more emphasis was placed on the training program vice the qualification program. One interesting thing was the concern that a qualification program would be difficult to implement because the command might have reservations about qualifying someone who completes the requirements yet does not have the confidence of management. This issue will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter as it was prominent in the supervisor's comments.

11. General comments

This, the last question in this survey, was intended as a catch all for comments or suggestions that were not previously addressed. There were some very good comments and it was evident that training is an emotional issue for many of these people. The specific question was:

Question # 11: General comments on the training and qualification program at your command.

a. Responses

(1) GS-7

The comments paralleled many that were already received. There was one especially rich comment that indicated the frustration that at least some have experienced:

It is frustrating for new arrivals because there is

absolutely no training program for GS-7 interns. You are brought in, told to read the FAR, and left to your own devices for the next 3-4 weeks until someone can teach you something (usually a GS-11 or 12, never a contracting officer). If you are an activity intern (i.e. non-Mechanicsburg) you will wait a long time for your required classes. I think it is absolutely ridiculous that I will have to wait 12-14 months to receive a course that a Mechanicsburg intern receives in 2-4 months. Then, because the activity is shrinking, they dump work on you that a GS-7 or GS-9 should be doing, so you make mistakes, legal mistakes. It should not be the responsibility of a GS-7 to negotiate complex CPFF, IDIQ contracts when he/she has never had the training to know what CPFF means or even stands for.

There were also those who felt the overall program was adequate.

(2) GS-9

Again, some of the same issues that were already raised were repeated. One individual stated that "I've been here almost two years. I've only had 2 of the 6 classes which I will need at the end of my third year and I'm not sure anyone (besides my contracting officer) gives a hoot!"

(3) GS-11

One point that was brought up was "We need more formal "warrant qualification" instruction/guidance - perhaps once a month get all 11s and 12s together to go over some insights from branch heads."

(4) GS-12

The unique comment here was "[The] training program is very good. Qualification program is pretty much nonexistent. If a GS-12 performs well on a visible contracting issue, then they will receive more responsibilities. It is more of a favoritism, "proving of one self" type structure."

b. Analysis

This question was intended as a catch-all for comments that were not already received throughout the survey. In reality there was no new ground covered, however, there were some good comments that were provided for reader interest.

D. SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a synopsis of the responses given by the interns and contract specialists at FISC Det Washington, followed by the researcher's analysis of the responses. Several themes are beginning to emerge from this study, - chief among them is the desire by the interns for proactive one-on-one training from the supervisors. There is the desire from the junior interns for contracting specific training and from the senior 1102s for general training in management. In the background of all this is the concern that there may not be the time to conduct training, due to workload pressure, and the recognition that everyone needs constant

updating on the ever changing rules and regulations.

The next chapter will include the survey questions, responses and analysis of the supervisors.

IV. SUPERVISOR QUESTIONS

A. BACKGROUND

In June of 1995, a formal interview questionnaire was given to ten supervisors at FISC Det Washington. Nine of the ten responded to the survey. The breakdown of respondents was five GS-13s, three GS-14s and one GS-15. Their experience at this command ranged from five to sixteen years with the average being just less than ten years.

B. DISCUSSION

This chapter will analyze the responses of the supervisors and reconcile them with the responses the interns gave in the previous chapter. The participation of supervisors in employee training is critical to the success of the proposed training program. Xerox Corporation won the 1989 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in large part due to its "cascading" training program which demands the participation of supervisors in employee training.[Ref 19, p.75] The recommended training program will rely heavily on the support and participation of supervisors.

C. QUESTIONNAIRE CONTENT

1. Description of Training

The expectation of this question was to receive responses that shed light on what the current training program looked liked. This question attempted to gain management's perspective on the command's training program. It was felt that this would be a good starting point for designing a new training program. The specific question was:

Question #1: Describe the Contract Specialist in-house training.

a. Responses

The responses discussed a well-structured, vigorous training program which enjoyed the support of the 1102s and was considered by management to be a high priority. It consists of topics related to operational issues at FISC Det Washington and policy regarding the procurement laws and regulations. The training sessions are regularly scheduled, pertinent, and focused. One stated that there is always room to bring in outside expertise, but overall it is a good program.

They described the training program as lectures/discussions which they gave to small groups (10-20 interns) based upon the experience (grade) level of the students. Topics generally consist of introduction materials

covering the procurement cycle. Besides the training classes for lower grade specialists, classes for all grades are given periodically, usually once a month. Division heads, GS-14s, have recently been preparing and presenting training to lower level employees (GS-7/9) on a rotating basis. The two operational division directors also provide training to the branch heads. Branch heads are also responsible for training the senior 12s. All supervisors continually develop training for the GS-7s through 12s. There are times when training is given to the entire 1102 community at the command. The topics for this training are general in nature.

One respondent stated that all contract specialists receive OJT daily and as work is assigned. Branch heads are supposed to do one-on-one training in addition to OJT.

b. Analysis

As mentioned above the intention of this question was to compare these responses to those of the interns and contract specialists. The responses held no surprises and spoke to what appears to be a well-structured training program. It appears the supervisors believe the training program to be more effective than do the interns. This may be more a function of what the supervisors want the training program to be rather than the reality of what it actually is as viewed by the interns.

The training, as observed by the researcher, looked to be

very effective and well received. A division director (GS-14) presented one training session to a group of about fifteen 7s and 9s. The session objectives were presented clearly and concisely at the beginning and the format was more of a discussion than a lecture. They provided instructive handouts to all participants to guide them through the discussion and to permit easy note taking for later use as a resource.

It appeared that the division director had thoroughly prepared for this lesson and it was very well received. It is not known how much time was spent in preparation for this lesson. Nevertheless, it was obviously well thought out and the presenter was ready for all the questions that the interns asked. The time it takes the presenter to prepare a lesson is a critical component in any proposed training program. It has been well established that time is a very precious commodity at FISC Det Washington. An investment in time up front, as is usually the case in any project, pays dividends in the form of a productive training session when they conduct the actual training.

Because the comments were very similar to those in the last chapter there is not a lot of new analysis that can be done with these responses that has not already been presented.

2. Characteristics of an in-house Training Program

This question attempted to gather information on what the supervisors felt were important characteristics of an in-house

training program. The responses will be analyzed for later use in developing the proposed training program. The specific question was:

Question #2: What are some characteristics of an in-house training program you would like to see implemented at your command?

a. Responses

Many respondents indicated that some common characteristics of a training program are that sessions should be regularly scheduled, cancellations should be rare, and the training geared to the grade level of the 1102. Others mentioned the need for consistently high quality instruction with standardization of lessons. There should be clear direction from management so that everyone knows what training they should have accomplished at each grade level. The training should be interactive, not just lectures. The program should use outside subject area experts - work group sessions with hands-on practical exercises to view skills and exercise decision making processes.

One supervisor said they would like a guidebook or reference book that would walk an intern through each step of the procurement cycle. This reference book should be set up with FAR citations to help the intern do further research and to find definitions besides helping the intern with specific contracting problems. The reference book would also cite

other books on procurement to familiarize the new employee with other literature in the field. This idea of a desk guide also came up as a suggestion from the survey given to the interns.

b. Analysis

The comments, recommendations, and suggestions were very similar to those brought up by the 1102s in the last chapter and therefore much of the analysis addressing those comments is appropriate for the supervisor's responses. Some responses do not require a great deal of analysis. One example of this is the desire for regularly scheduled, high quality training sessions geared toward the grade level of the recipient which is a difficult concept to argue against.

One suggestion that requires further analysis concerns the idea of interactive training, vice just lecture, and the use of hands-on practical exercises to view skills and exercise decision making processes. The points that they brought up speak to the need for getting the employee involved in the training as an active participant vice simply trying to absorb the information presented. This is particularly appropriate where the material is complex and open to different interpretations. The last chapter discussed the effectiveness of these concepts with the practice oriented "do-and-debrief" approach as described in the Carolan article. It was shown that this approach of having the trainee explain

what he or she was suppose to learn was a superior approach to showing them how it is done and asking them to repeat what they have just been shown. This concept then is appropriate for use in the proposed training program and should be incorporated to the largest extent possible.

Another response that will be analyzed is the concept of a guidebook for the intern. In conversations with the interns and supervisors and in comments taken from the surveys there is a consensus that a guidebook would be beneficial to the intern. This guidebook, as described by both supervisors and interns, would be a desktop reference that would aid the 1102 in the daily performance of their duty. It would be organized in such a manner to allow the 1102 to easily look up how to do certain contracting related tasks. This guidebook would allow the 1102 independently to solve problems without the need of going to the supervisor for assistance. The supervisor would always be available for assistance as needed. The guidebook could also be available electronically on the 1102's desktop computer vice in hardcopy format.

There are a couple problems with such a guidebook. The first being that such a guidebook does not exist in the form the interns desire. The second difficulty with such a guidebook is keeping it updated. With the tremendous amount of change in the world of procurement, maintaining a resource that is accurate would be a difficult challenge. Maintenance would require a great deal of constant management review to

ensure that the operating procedures in this guidebook are according to the way management wants to do business. Even if the resources were put in motion to create and maintain this guidebook the question is raised whether the 1102s would use it to the degree that they have expressed interest in it. When people bring up the idea of a guidebook they envision the "perfect" tool that will answer all the hard questions they have wrestled with in the past. Rarely will what they envision become reality, especially in the case of a complex system such as procurement. Having said all that, the researcher believes that some form of a guidebook or standard operating procedures could be developed. The guidebook would have to be relatively short, at least initially because of the tremendous effort involved. It should cover the topics which the 1102s most frequently encounter, and permit updating and management review.

3. Qualification Program

This question attempted to determine what support a qualification program would have with the supervisors. In addition, it was expected that they would provide opinions for use in deciding what the program would look like. The specific question was:

Question #3: Would you favor a formal qualification program and if so what would be some of the characteristics of this program? Figure nine

graphically depicts the responses:

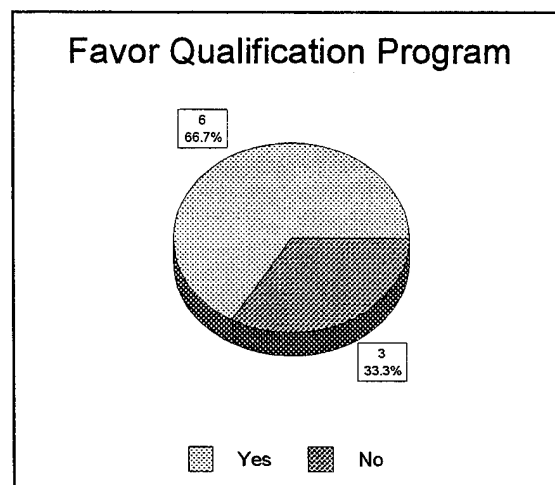


Figure 9: Qualification

a. Responses

One respondent, who did not favor a formal qualification program, said it was because "we have to comply with the requirements of DAWIA. These require contracting personnel to be certified at various proficiency levels before they can be promoted to the next higher grade."

Most did favor a qualification program. These people were looking for a guide or checklist so they would know what an intern must learn as they move through the internship program. The qualification program should include sub-proficiency tasks (such as computer software) plus contracts oriented proficiencies. In addition it should include "conduct" in the sense of requiring the 1102 to present well-

researched alternatives to various problems (already in performance standards).

Some felt the program should include exams and oral boards to test the intern's knowledge. Another favored a formal promotion board with oral presentations by the candidate.

One respondent felt they should design the "program" at the activity level (not Navy or DoD-wide), with topics tailored to that activity (FISC Det Washington). This person also felt they should require that the 1102s pass an examination before promotion to the next grade.

One who favored a qualification program felt the successful graduate should be able to design acquisition strategies. The validation of this would be in the form of a project (acquisition term paper) versus an exam which the person felt was useless. It was felt that a project would more accurately measure the person's real business sense and their ability to interact professionally with vendors and customers responsibly. Another felt the project should encompass all of the major principles and concepts required to execute the procurement process.

b. Analysis

This was an attempt to solicit ideas on how they would structure a qualification program. It was interesting that three supervisors would not favor a local qualification

program. The fear was that a worker could meet all the requirements for qualification and yet not have management's confidence in their judgment. It should be noted that qualification was left open to interpretation and most respondents seemed to interpret it as a qualification for a contracting officer warrant. In fact the qualification program could be a series of qualifications leading up to qualification for a warrant. It should be pointed out that being qualified for a warrant does not necessarily mean that a person will actually get a warrant. These are two separate issues, with one meaning the person has satisfied the training requirements of a warrant and the other meaning that a person is filling a position that carries with it a contracting officer warrant. The decision to grant a warrant is dependent upon the number of warrants available at the command and the philosophy the command takes toward issuing warrants. Any qualification program should spell out clearly the additional responsibility, if any, that comes with successful completion of the program. This is particularly important because this has the potential to become a contentious issue between the supervisors and 1102s.

Some of those who favored a qualification program spoke to the need for a project vice an exam to determine qualification. There is currently a move within ASN (RD&A) Acquisition Education and Training Programs office to require a "senior project" as a condition of "graduating" from the

internship program. In talking with Ms. Anne Alexander, Deputy Director for Acquisition Education and Training Programs, the aim of this project is to give the intern a "big picture" perspective of the business aspects of Naval acquisition. In addition the project is a vehicle to demonstrate the attainment of specific competencies. During the period of this research the Director of Acquisition Career Management was drafting a policy letter that would spell out the requirements for such a project. It is believed that such a "senior project" would satisfy the supervisor's desire for the intern to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the acquisition system.

4. Performance Shortfalls

This question attempted to gather the specific performance shortfalls that the supervisors had observed with the interns. Once they identified the shortfalls, they could be addressed in the proposed training program. The specific question was:

Question #4: What specific performance shortfalls have you experienced with the contract specialists who have worked for you?

a. Responses

Responses discussed some specific problems that the supervisors experience on a daily basis. The comments ranged from 1102s who had insufficient knowledge of the rules and

regulations to those who did not know how to apply those rules and regulations. It also talked to inexperience as the root of the problem and that some people are not going to understand the process no matter how much time and effort are invested in training them.

One respondent said that it is difficult for the 1102s to grasp and apply regulations, policy, the procurement cycle, and most of all common sense to their procurements. One supervisor said the interns seem to work in a vacuum. Another cited the inability to efficiently incorporate data into business clearances, the lack of exposure to common contract types (e.g., CPIF), and the inability to generate effective recommendations for a broad range of actions independently. Other shortfalls were: insufficient knowledge of the regulations; the inability to read and understand written materials sufficiently; poor analytical skills; lack of initiative in doing independent research and problem solving; and the general lack of organization and poor productivity.

Other responses talked about the lack of understanding of the specific steps required in the procurement process and that many 1102s process requirements from rote procedures without understanding the process. They felt the intern was not able to reason through (critique) a problem that they were more inclined just to ask "what do I do". Without the reasoning ability they were unable to see details that, if ignored, cause problems for the whole acquisition system. The

1102s were better at providing editorials and commentary on acquisition, business, and legal issues vice looking at, treating and comprehending the issue at hand. Similarly there is the need, and difficulty, of getting the intern to think in a "good business way".

Another characterized it as inexperience vice lack of performance. This person said: "I can't say that I have experienced any specific performance shortfalls with the contract specialists who have worked for me. What I have experienced is inexperience in junior specialists because of the length of time they have been in the intern program." Another respondent said that new employees need more guidance and the branch heads seldom have enough time to devote to them. Because the internship is only three years long, some journeyman 12s are not technically capable of independently processing a variety of requirements.

One spoke to the frustration by saying

obviously technical knowledge of the rules and regulations could be improved somewhat with training. People could be exposed to good work habits such as how to be better organized and more productive. However some poor performers will not improve even if they are trained seven days a week, we have to recognize training has its limitations.

b. Analysis

This analysis will address three main issues which surfaced. The issues were the lack of the intern's ability to grasp and apply rules and regulations; the lack of experience

in contracting; and developing the business judgment of the intern. The issue concerning poor performance (that some people will not improve no matter how much training they receive) will not be addressed in detail as this is a management issue and beyond the scope of this research.

The ability of the interns to apply the rules and regulations to their procurements is a central goal to a successful training program. The first level of a training program is learning the rules and regulations. An examination is appropriate to determine this level of knowledge. The ability to apply those rules and regulations is a second and much higher level of training which is more difficult to measure. It is this higher level of training that the supervisors are looking for the 1102s to achieve. The distinction was made in the previous chapter by Mr. Gordon Campbell in his discussion of specific versus general training. His conclusion was that to attain this higher level of reasoning requires the use of a case study approach using active discussions.

A second school of thought held that experience was the driving factor in a 1102's performance. The researcher does not disagree that experience is a great teacher, but it has also been said that it is an expensive teacher. As mentioned in Chapter II there is a distinction between OJT and "learning through experience" the latter implying a "hit or miss" form of education which is inefficient.[Ref 6, p. 1] The other aspect

of this comment speaks to the need to rotate the 1102s so they can get exposure to other areas of contracting. Job rotation is an effective strategy for cross training the 1102s as it allows them to gain a variety of experience.

The third issue that was addressed concerned developing the 1102's business judgment. Wrapped up in this comment was a statement that poor analytical skills were a major culprit in this problem. Although the interns come into the program with a 3.5 GPA, it should not be assumed that they have retained all of the analytical tools they were taught in college. It does, however, mean that these people are capable of learning the analytical techniques required as a part of good business judgment. The other aspect of business judgment is the judgment part of it. This judgment part does take time to develop and it comes with maturity and experience. The use of a mentor to pass on this maturity and experience is appropriate in this setting.

5. Attributes of an Effective Program

This question attempted to uncover specific items that a training program would contain to address the shortfalls mentioned above. The specific question was:

Question #5: How would an effective training program resolve some of the problems identified in question four?

a. Responses

An effective training program should allow the intern to apply the procurement regulations, statutes and common sense to their job. It should involve senior negotiators providing guidance and sharing their expertise with the 1102s. It should ensure that the shortcomings addressed above are not simply the result of lack of exposure, which often they may be. Another felt that allowing the 1102s to process various types of requirements, with more independence, and to assist customers in preparing adequate procurement packages was the best approach.

One respondent felt the program should cover general vice specific topics. This person felt an effective training program should broaden the 1102s knowledge without the 1102s having experienced a specific kind of contract, problem, cost issue, etc.

The message from one supervisor was that there needs to be a culture change with Government workers. The 1102s should recognize that they are a business and they should act like one. The key to a successful program, as one stated, when beyond merely training to addressing the cultural change of arming motivated people to effect change and give them confidence for accurate decision making. The ultimate goal is to "ensure that capable people are delegated to equipped people to produce quality products in a sharp, realistic professional business environment."

b. Analysis

The analysis will address the three main issues that were brought out in the responses. The issues were: the need for supervisors to share their expertise and provide guidance to the interns, allowing the interns more independence and interaction with customers, and lastly changing the culture of the Government worker.

The first issue discussed the idea of the supervisors sharing their expertise and guidance with the interns. This is really speaking to the idea of mentoring. Mentoring is very appropriate in this type of training setting. As mentioned above the business judgment of the 1102 can be positively shaped by a good example from a mentor.

Another suggestion was to allow the interns more independence and more interaction with customers. The idea of giving more independence goes counter to what the interns wanted as documented in their survey responses. Perhaps as the 1102s move through the internship program and gain more experience it is appropriate to let them have more independence. This is a judgment that the supervisor, after discussing it with the 1102, should make. The idea of giving the intern more freedom to interact with the customer is very appropriate. It is this interaction with the customer that will continue to reinforce the command's priorities, of customer service. By developing relationships with the

customer activities, the intern will learn a great deal about the procurement world outside their office.

The last issue addressed changing the culture of the Government worker to get the 1102s to act in a more business like manner. This closely ties in with mentoring, in that changes to the culture must have the encouragement from top management. In the situation that exists at FISC Det Washington, where they are getting a new influx of talent on a regular basis, changing the culture is a reasonable expectation. As shown in Chapter III 62% of the non-supervisory 1102s have less than two years of experience and 82% have less than three years at FISC Det Washington. These statistics speak to a relatively young workforce not set in its ways. With the current climate of change and streamlining in the world of procurement this is an ideal time to embark on a cultural shift toward embracing smart business practices.

6. Characteristics

This question was asked to obtain specific characteristics that the supervisors would like to see in a training program. The specific question was:

Question #6: What are some characteristics that a successful in-house training program would contain? Please rate 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important and check others with some importance. Figure 10 provides the responses.

a. *Responses*

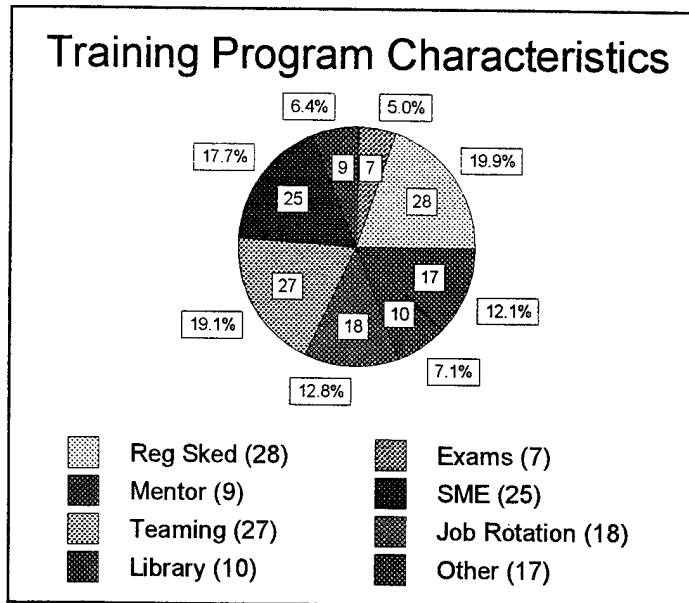


Figure 10: Characteristics
SME=Subject Matter Expert

<u>Score</u>	<u>Characteristic</u>
<u>28</u>	Regularly scheduled
<u>27</u>	Team structure with members from all levels deciding topics and schedule
<u>25</u>	Training conducted by subject matter experts (e.g. supervisors)
<u>18</u>	Exposure through frequent job rotation
<u>10</u>	Good library resources (trade journals, videos, etc.)
<u>7</u>	Written exams following training sessions
<u>5</u>	Training conducted by interns (interns must learn it to teach it.)
<u>5</u>	Mentor assigned for entire tenure at command
<u>5</u>	Inventive leadership approaches to true method teaching - see Gordon Campbell ALMC Ft Lee
<u>4</u>	Mentor assigned specific to a branch or division (mentor would change)

- 4 Top down management structure w/mgmt deciding topics and schedules
- 3 Grades from exams maintained in training record
- 2 No structure other than "trail by fire" w/supervisor assisting as required
- 1 No mentor program.

b. Analysis

The number one response was not surprising as this attribute has been mentioned throughout the surveys from both the supervisors and interns. The other characteristics that will be analyzed are: Team structure; Subject Matter Experts; Frequent job rotation; Library resources; and Mentors. The other characteristics are mentioned but will not be specifically analyzed.

The second most popular characteristic was the desire to implement a team structured approach for deciding on topics and schedules. This team would be made up of 1102s at all levels in the organization. The benefits to such an organization are that it provides a perspective from both the supervisor and the intern for that training considered appropriate and required. The concept of a Training Requirements Review Board (TRRB) is emerging as a vehicle to achieve this team structured approach. The TRRB would be headed by a GS-14 with representation from GS-7 through 13. The goal of the TRRB would be to deliver at least one good training session a month. In addition they would be the focal point for all training held at FISC Det Washington.

The third most popular characteristic was to have Subject Matter Experts (SME) conduct the training. This does not automatically mean the supervisors would conduct the training. Depending upon the topic it might be more appropriate to have 11s or 12s put together the training package and present it. The SME will be determined by the experience level of the audience. For example, the level of "expertise" would not have be so high when instructing 7s as it would when instructing 12s. By varying the level of expertise required and targeting the audience this will increase the pool of available instructors, which is a critical concern when staffing and workload is at issue.

The fourth most popular characteristic is frequent job rotation. This was also mentioned by the interns as being important to them. There are certainly important benefits that can arise for job rotation such as cross-training, and an appreciation for the command's mission. A critical aspect of job rotation, that this question did not ask, is how frequently should the 1102s be rotated. There are many factors that play into how frequently someone should be rotated such as the complexity of the job, how quickly the employee learns the job, and the needs of the employee and the employer. Because these factors are so situation specific it would be a guess on the researcher's part to recommend the length of time between rotations.

The fifth characteristic was good library resources.

This is certainly an important part of a professional working environment. Keeping up-to-date material available in an uncluttered, easily accessible setting sends a message of commitment to the 1102s. The library at FISC Det Washington is a very good resource complete with videos and periodicals. There appeared to be a commitment from management to continue to expand and improve this resource.

Mentoring was the sixth most popular characteristic. There was some disagreement whether the mentor should be assigned for the entire internship or if the mentor should change depending on the branch the intern is assigned to. This decision is best left to the leadership at FISC Det Washington as they are in the position to evaluate the talent of the potential mentors and how best to assign them. The interaction the mentor has with their trainee is an area that can be analyzed further. The key for the mentor to remember is that they are there to provide feedback and the primary purpose for feedback is to improve performance. According to an article in *HR Focus* by Robert W. Lucas the following six step process should be followed when providing feedback: [Ref 12, p. 7]

1. **State what you observed.** Provide specific examples of observed performance or failure to perform to avoid being considered unfair and/or argumentative.

2. **Describe your feelings about the performance.** Give personal feedback to the employee so he or she can focus attention away from the incorrect performance and reduce his or her defensiveness

3. **Explain the impact of the performance.** Many times employees do not fully understand the impact of their actions or inactivity. Remind them of the potential impact.

4. **Solicit understanding, agreement and/or commitment.** Obtain an acknowledgment of need and/or agreement to change before going any further in the feedback process. Otherwise, employees may resist efforts, and time will be wasted.

5. **Make suggestions for improvement, if necessary.** Offer suggestions or even demonstrate a task so the employee understands the materials and procedures. Do not give all the answers. Instead, offer tools and guidance.

6. **Reinforce support.** Let the employee know that you are available as a resource.

These six recommendations provide a framework for the mentor to follow when working with the intern. There is a great deal more to being a successful mentor than what is written above. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyze the entire mentor process, but either formally or informally, mentoring goes on and should be a part of the training program.

7. Contracting Competencies

The purpose of this question was to narrow down topics relevant to the type of contracting competencies most often used at FISC Det Washington. The list of contracting competencies was derived from the FAI Contract Specialist Workbook. As the responses indicate there were clearly some competencies that should be stressed in a training program

tailored to this FISC. The specific question was:

Question # 7: What contracting competencies are most relevant to your situation and therefore would be good training topics? Please rate the top ten with 1 being the most important and check others with some importance.

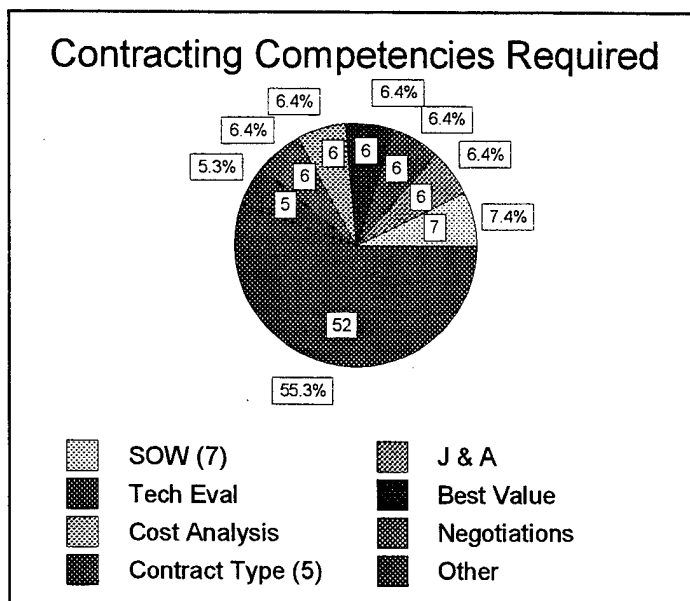


Figure 11: Competencies

Figure 11 provides the responses. It is noted that due to the numerous choices, many respondents simply

checked the blocks vice numbering their choices.

a. Responses

Determination of Need

- 1 Forecasting requirements
- 3 Acquisition planning

Initiating the Procurement

- 1 Purchase request
- 3 Funding
- 1 Market research

Analysis of Requirements

- 2 Specifications
- 7 SOW
 - 2 Critique proposed SOW
 - 2 Advise requiring activity and obtain needed changes
 - 1 Select and implement techniques to test and improve SOW
 - 6 Determine need for/write J&A
 - 2 Determine need for/write ADP approval request
- 0 Services

Sourcing

- 0 Sources
- 0 Set Asides
- 3 8(a) procurement
- 4 Competition requirements
- 0 Unsolicited proposals
- 1 Lease vs Purchase
- 3 Technical evaluation factors
- 2 Methods of procurement
- 3 Procurement planning

Solicitation

- 5 Contract types
- 2 Letter contracts
- 0 Contract financing
- 1 Use of Govt property & supply sources
- 0 Need for bonds
- 3 Solicitation preparation

- 2 Publicizing proposed procurement
- 0 Preaward inquiries
- 4 Prebid/Preproposal conferences
- 1 Amending solicitations
- 0 Canceling solicitations

Evaluation - sealed bidding

- 0 Processing bids
- 1 Bid acceptance
- 0 Late offers
- 1 Bid prices
- 1 Responsiveness

Evaluation - Negotiation

- 3 Processing proposals
- 6 Technical evaluation
- 6 Best value evaluation
- 1 Price objectives
- 3 Cost and Pricing data
- 3 Audits
- 6 Cost analysis
- 2 Evaluating other terms and conditions
- 4 Competitive range
- 2 Fact finding
- 4 Negotiation strategy
- 6 Conducting negotiations

Award

- 2 Mistakes in offers
- 2 Responsibility
- 1 Sub-contracting requirements
- 1 Preparing awards
- 2 Award
- 4 Debriefing
- 3 Protests
- 0 Fraud and exclusion

Post - Award

- 2 Legal issues
- 1 Disputes

Others

- 1 Change orders
- 1 Cost overruns

One comment amplifying a response said "...acquisition planning is a biggie and really touches on all the others - you need to know your stuff if acquisition planning is effective at all."

b. Analysis

The top seven competencies were listed in figure eleven. It is intuitive that these competencies should be looked at first when developing and scheduling training. The comment about acquisition planning is interesting and deserves further development. Acquisition planning encompasses the entire procurement and, for training purposes, is fertile ground for case studies and discussions.

In fairness to the respondents this was a very complicated question and one that probably does not lend itself to a survey. The responses may have been different if the supervisors had spent a few days contemplating the question.

8. Sequencing of Training

The aim of this last question was to give the supervisors the opportunity to discuss how they would sequence the training of the 1102s. Given the diverse background of knowledge the 1102s have depending upon their experience this was seen to be a difficult task. The specific question was:

Question #8: How would you sequence training in various contracting competencies given that those receiving the training will be at different skill levels and/or have different training needs at any given time?

a. Responses

There was acknowledgment that this was a difficult task to accomplish. One recommendation was to begin with an overall review of the procurement cycle and then commence training with step one of the procurement cycle. Another said they would use varying levels of training (e.g. 100, 200, 300 level) and cycle through various competencies so everyone is exposed to the material. This person went on to say they should give choices of training (e.g. this week here are your two choices) with alternate dates if the 1102 wanted to attend both.

Some of the comments discussed scheduling and grade levels vice sequencing of topics. While the comments were good, these issues have already been discussed.

One of the supervisors did not have much sympathy for the interns who were having trouble understanding the material. As this person said "All (plus or minus) are college graduates - they get paid \$ enough for a (administrative) function. Training is repeated on annual basis for key issues - second exposure for bright intern with practical experience - makes for good training. Most dead wood is at the 12 level."

b. Analysis

The consensus of opinion seemed to be that the training should follow the procurement cycle. The sequencing then would be to arrange the high use competencies identified above in the order in which they come into the procurement cycle.

The comment concerning the adequacy of training is worth addressing even if it does not perfectly fit into this category of question. The interns at FISC Det Washington are intelligent (3.5 GPA) and young. For many this is probably their first professional job out of college and the start of their professional career. Most of them probably recognize that to really learn and develop a deep understanding of contracting they will have to work extra hours without compensation. Some of them pursue evening education programs in pursuit of an MBA, demonstrating the willingness to further their development. The training program should deliver training to these interns in an efficient and effective manner and the intern must be responsible for filling in the gaps. It is easy to blame problems on a training program, but ultimately it is the responsibility of the employee to learn his or her job.

D. SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a comprehensive look at the responses from the eight question survey give to the supervisors. Several themes have emerged from the responses, one of which is the belief that a team structured approach is appropriate for scheduling and developing training. The idea of desk top guidebook was popular and the analysis discussed the problems with such a guidebook. Chapter V will tie all

the research together and provide conclusions and recommendations for this project.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. GENERAL

The research for this thesis uncovered several key points concerning training and qualification programs that can be applied to FISC Det Washington. The challenge for FISC Det Washington is to take educated individuals (interns) and teach them complicated processes (contracting) well enough to allow them to work independently and to motivate them to use their education to continually improve the process. This is the essence of employee development and the goal of a training and qualification program. The goal of this research project was to provide a framework (Training and Qualification program) to achieve this larger goal of employee development. This chapter discusses the findings and provides conclusions and recommendations to the research questions. Also presented are suggestions for associated areas of further research.

B. CONCLUSIONS

1. Conclusion #1

Time is a precious commodity at FISC Det Washington and training is secondary to production in terms of priority.

The researcher spoke with numerous supervisors in other contracting offices during the five-month period of this study and the consensus is that OJT and local training are pushed aside in favor of getting contracts out the door. Everyone

believes that training is important and wish they had the time to do more, but the pressure to produce made conducting training difficult. It is striking this balance between training and production that is the key to a successful training program. The other half of this equation is delivering the training effectively and efficiently.

Religiously conducting OJT and training sessions requires a leap of faith by the supervisors. The supervisors must believe that this investment in time will pay dividends in the long run. In order for them to feel confident they must have faith in the intern's ability to grasp the material and they must have confidence in themselves that they can effectively deliver the training.

2. Conclusion #2

The training needs of the junior contract specialists (GS-7s and 9s) are different than those of the more senior contract specialists (GS-11s and 12s).

The junior 1102s are seeking training on specific contract issues while the senior 1102s are looking for training in management skills. While both were looking for training that keeps them up-to-date on new rules and regulations, the junior 1102s are still seeking a better understanding of the basics. The concepts of specific versus general problem solving, as discussed in Chapter III, are appropriate here.

Further evidence of this distinction is the desire by the majority of 1102s to have training that is focused on the experience level of the participants. There is a great deal of agreement, with both supervisors and 1102s, that training should be conducted in small groups with people of similar experience levels.

3. Conclusion #3

The development and use of a desktop guidebook is supported by both supervisors and 1102s.

The ability of a contract specialist to have the answers to many frequently asked questions at their fingertips is deemed, by both supervisors and 1102s, to be a useful tool. The problems of developing and maintaining this type of resource are discussed in Chapter III. The main problems being that it involves a considerable effort to develop, and once developed, requires a considerable effort to maintain, especially with the nature of frequent changes within the procurement world. It is because of these two issues that a recommendation was not made to develop such a guidebook.

4. Conclusion #4

Timing of the DAWIA courses is an important aspect of the intern program.

There is concern expressed by several GS-7 interns who had not received CON 101 (Contracting Fundamentals) in a timely manner. Some of these people waited as long as one

year to receive this course, while the consensus among supervisors is that they should take this course in a three to six month window after reporting aboard. There are other cases where interns felt they received the various DAU courses too late to be of a real benefit to their development. The point in all these cases is that they should take the mandatory DAU courses in sequence and at the appropriate time to fully benefit the intern.

5. Conclusion #5

Training the supervisor how to train and do OJT is a worthwhile investment.

Supervisors have a tremendous influence on the development of the intern. Supervisors skilled in training are better able to deliver OJT in an effective and efficient manner. It should not be assumed that the ability to impart knowledge to a subordinate comes with the job. It is a skill that they must develop and cultivate.

6. Conclusion #6

There was disagreement among the supervisors concerning the need or desire for an in-house qualification program.

While the majority (70%) did agree that a qualification program should be instituted, there was a significant (30%) percentage that did not favor such a program. The major objection to a qualification program was the fear that someone could complete the program, yet was not entirely ready to

assume the duties of the position for which the qualification was intended. This is a potential problem with a qualification program, however as discussed in Chapter IV it is something that management can deal with by having a board approval process as the final step.

7. Conclusion #7

The workforce of 1102s at FISC Det Washington is fairly junior.

Sixty-two percent of the workforce had two or fewer years of contracting experience. Over eighty percent have three or fewer years of experience working at FISC Det Washington. These figures point to a workforce that is fairly inexperienced with the DoD acquisition system.

8. Conclusion #8

The consensus among all 1102s at FISC Det Washington was that training in small groups with people of similar experience was more beneficial than training sessions with all 1102s at one time.

The 1102s felt that the "one size fits all" training approach was not beneficial. The problems with this type of training was that the training was over their heads or was too basic, depending upon the experience of the 1102. The other problem was that some 1102s felt intimidated about asking questions in a large group.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendation #1

Supervisors need to deliver training in a manner that does not adversely affect production.

OJT should be conducted, to the maximum extent possible, in a way that does not impede production but rather enhances it. Effective training, for the most part, is delivered not in a training context, but rather in the context of actual work production. It is this "just-in-time" training that is most relevant to the employee and thus most meaningful. Conducting OJT in this context satisfies the first tenet of effective training, that being relevancy.

One way to implement this concept is to conduct OJT with a small group of interns who are working on similar projects, for example J&As, and focus training specifically on the completion of that specific task. The training will be effective because the subject is of immediate importance to the individual, thus it is relevant, and the individual will be prepared to ask in-depth, intelligent questions vice simply being in a "receive mode" as is the case with a good deal of training.

Conducting OJT in this manner may not be as efficient (in terms of getting work out the door) for the organization, but in the long run the organization will benefit because they will improve their processes (J&As in this case). The other benefit of this approach is that sharing among the individuals

will occur and create a synergistic learning effect. In addition, it will help to build a team work atmosphere among the interns. The ideas that come out of this group "exercise" will benefit the entire organization and help foster a learning organization. In addition, the training and production dilemma discussed above will be mitigated.

2. Recommendation #2

A Training Requirements Review Board (TRRB) consisting of interns and supervisors should be established to schedule, develop and deliver training.

The membership of this board should be one GS-14, one GS-13, one GS-12, one GS-11 and two interns from the 7 or 9 level. The goal of this board is to develop, refine and approve in-house lesson plans as well as have overall control of the training program at the command. The board should approach their responsibility in the same manner as a Process Action Team would.

This board should be empowered to make substantive changes to the program if they deem it appropriate. One of the best ways to empower this group is to give them a significant training budget and allow them to spend this money for courses, library reference material or whatever they deem important to further the training opportunities. Although membership on this board would be a collateral duty, and one that should be rotated on a regular basis, giving it real

power in the form of a budget will induce people to get involved and seek board membership.

3. Recommendation #3

GS-11s and 12s should be involved in training 7s and 9s.

One concern expressed by the 11s and 12s is the lack of management training opportunities. In addition, many supervisors expressed concern that the 12s never have a chance to exercise leadership or management skills before becoming a supervisor. One way to develop the 11s and 12s is to get them involved in the training of the 7s and 9s. This involvement will teach them a great deal about dealing with different personalities, motivating people, and give them the opportunity to develop their own managerial traits.

4. Recommendation #4

The Federal Acquisition Institute's (FAI) Contract Specialist Blueprints should be used as a starting point for developing training lessons.

All of FAI's material is available via the Internet at no cost. The material can be loaded on the FISC Det Washington LAN and accessed by all interns. They can modify and tailor the material, such as the blueprints, to FISC Det Washington's needs. The use of the FAI computer-based training allows the intern access to training when they need it to supplement the OJT they receive from their supervisors. In addition, the

interns can use the FAI training courses and practicums for independent study.

5. Recommendation #5

GS-7s should be rotated among upper management when they report aboard.

One of the concerns expressed by the interns is the lack of training they receive upon reporting aboard. By immediately rotating the interns among management they can learn what function these supervisors perform at FISC Det Washington and have a better understanding of the mission. During this period they will be given basic training assignments, such as acronyms to memorize or learning the procurement cycle, and a test at the end of the week to see how well they did. The competencies for CON 101 (Contracting Fundamentals) found in the July 1995 DoD Acquisition Career Management, Mandatory Course Fulfillment Program and Competency Standards (ADS-95-03-GD) is an excellent reference for developing basic training assignments. Another possible reference is the FAI Contract Specialist Workbook.

The combination of assignments and seeing what goes on at the command will give the intern a fast-paced introduction and allow them to become acclimated quickly. The assignments should be one week with the Deputy Director of Contracts, one week with a division director, one week in legal, one week each with two different branch heads and one week in the ADP

department.

6. Recommendation #6

Development and maintenance of an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for each contract specialist should be mandatory.

It is the responsibility of the employee with the supervisor to establish the IDP. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure each employee's IDP satisfies all mandatory training and education requirements. An annual review of the IDP should be conducted between the supervisor and the employee. The IDP should follow the format outlined by the Naval Acquisition Intern Program (NAIP) administrator or the one found in the FAI Contract Specialist Blueprints.

7. Recommendation #7

A case study approach should be used as the vehicle to deliver training on complex concepts and ideas.

A case study provides the command the opportunity to impart their philosophy for doing business upon the recipients. In a scenario driven case study there are many opportunities to handle various issues that arise. It is how these issues are handled that speaks to the philosophy of the organization. By allowing the 1102s to work through a case, make decisions and commit to a course of action the supervisor can assess if the trainee has correctly interpreted a rule or regulation. In addition, the supervisor can explain why the

command prefers one approach to another. Given this general direction, the 1102 can then take this philosophy and apply it to their procurements.

8. Recommendation #8

Training should be conducted in small groups with people of similar grade level and experience.

A discussion format is superior to a lecture format for delivering basic contracting concepts and ideas. Because of the relatively small number of interns at FISC Det Washington, the training lends itself to discussion vice lecture format. The ability of the interns to ask questions and discuss concepts, rules and regulations allow for a deeper understanding of the topics. The junior interns are looking for an understanding of the rules so they can apply the rules to their procurements. Letting them clear up confusion by allowing them to ask questions is important.

9. Recommendation #9

Project oriented training, wherein the intern is tasked with completing a project, should be used in this command.

Simply repeating the process they have seen does not give the intern the opportunity to demonstrate a profound understanding of the concept. By having the intern demonstrate an understanding, through applying and explaining their thinking process, forces the intern to put everything

together. It also gives the supervisor a better picture of where the intern's weaknesses are. Having the intern do a senior project as discussed in chapter IV accomplishes this goal.

D. RESEARCH QUESTIONS ANSWERED

1. Primary Research Question

How might an in-house training program be structured that most efficiently develops the skills, knowledge and competencies required of GS-1102 series personnel and interns with on-the-job training as the cornerstone?

FISC Det Washington should institute a Training Requirements Review Board (TRRB) as discussed above to decide the training topics, schedules and administer the program. They should train the supervisors in how to conduct OJT for the interns. The GS-7s should spend time with the supervisors for one week at a time to gain an understanding of what the command's workload is like and how the various layers of management interact.

2. Subsidiary Research Questions

a. What type of contracting workload does the Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC), Norfolk, Washington detachment (hereafter the FISC Det Washington) have?

The list of contracting competencies shows the type of

contracting workload at this command. Figure twelve illustrates the top seven as reported by the supervisors.

Contracting Competencies Required

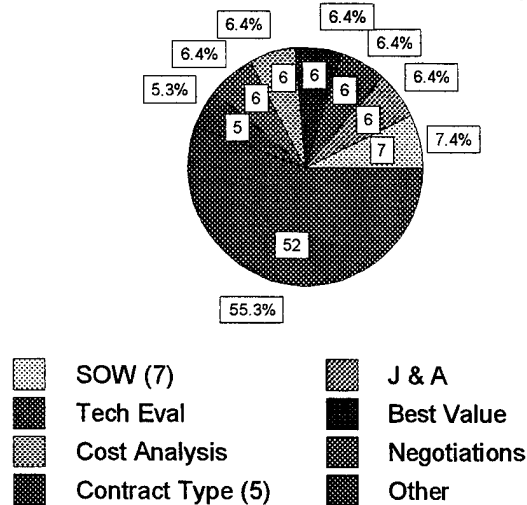


Figure 12: Contracting Competencies

The command's training program should address these topics in more detail. The OJT topics will take care of themselves because the training will cover what is critical to the intern at that moment in time.

b. What education level and skills do the GS-1102 contract specialists and interns at FISC Det Washington possess?

The interns are college graduates with 3.5 GPA. The majority have business degrees which satisfy the DAWIA requirements for business education.

c. What is the best use of available resources at FISC

Det Washington to achieve the goal of a quality training program which emphasizes on-the-job training?

The decision for resource utilization of training dollars should be placed with the TRRB. This group is in the best position to decide the need and allocate resources.

d. What qualities are common to successful on-the-job training programs?

Educated and motivated supervisors are critical to a successful program. Training should be focused and well-defined vice just learning from experience. The trainer should be able to articulate in one or two sentences the concept they are trying to teach the employee. If they cannot do this, they will likely confuse the trainee and the training session will not be efficient or effective. Training should be conducted on a regular basis.

e. What should the training and qualification program at FISC Det Washington look like?

The training program should be a development program and include training that is scheduled at least once a month. They should conduct this training in small groups of people with similar experience levels with the goal of a continual development process. Topics should include the seven competencies as outlined above and other topics as determined by the TRRB. There are currently twenty-three training packages developed and on-the-shelf at FISC Det Washington. The TRRB should update these training packages when they

schedule the packages.

Job rotation among the various branches should be the cornerstone to the training program because of the exposure to different supervisors and different types of contracts. OJT should be the main teaching technique for enriching the knowledge of the 1102s. Supervisors should be trained in how to conduct OJT effectively.

The qualification program should focus on certifying the trainees. Criterion-referenced grading vice norm referenced grading should be used to test proficiency. In a competency-based system, as this one would be, the trainee would have to demonstrate to the supervisor the ability to perform each task. Norm-reference grading is familiar to most people as this is the type used in the vast majority of schools, where if a person gets 70% correct they pass the test. In criterion-referenced grading the person only passes when they successfully demonstrate knowledge of all tasks.

The qualification program could be used as one element in assessing the potential of a first year intern. The first year for an intern is critical because under the civil service employment rules they can terminate an employee who is failing to perform relatively easily. It should be stressed that the qualification program would be one data point in assessing the potential of an employee. Management must not abdicate its responsibility for assessing the employee by relying solely on a qualification program. The qualification program provided

in Appendix B should be used.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. How effective are the DAU courses in delivering the right training at the right level and what is the optimal timing for the DAWIA courses?

2. What is the optimal mix of training versus production at a contracting activity that will maximize long term productivity?

3. When is the optimal time to send interns to the mandatory DAWIA courses and what preparation should they have before attending?

APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE

1102 and Supervisor Survey Questionnaires

Naval Postgraduate School
Department of Systems Management
815 Program
Monterey, CA 93940

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

COMMAND _____ NAME _____ DATE _____
(Optional)

EXPERIENCE LEVEL: GRADE _____ POSITION _____

(indicate if Intern)

_____ 0-2
_____ 3-5
_____ 6-10
_____ 11-15
_____ 16 or more

AT COMMAND (YEARS)
_____ 0-3
_____ 4-5
_____ 6-10
_____ 11 or more

QUESTIONS

For the purposes of this survey the following definitions apply:

Training Program - a structured method of educating for the purpose of increasing the knowledge of contracting specific topics.

Qualification Program - A structured method of formally increasing a persons level of responsibility to perform specific tasks. For example, qualifying for a contracting officer warrant.

1. What are the current training or qualification weaknesses that you perceive in the 1102 contract specialist community?

Training

Qualification

2. What do you see as the specific training needs of mid-

career or contract intern contract specialist personnel?

3. What formal contracting training have you attended?

4. Describe your in-house training program.

5. Who should be conducting in-house training?

<input type="checkbox"/> Branch Heads	<input type="checkbox"/> Interns
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior GS-12s	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

6. Is your local command in-house program adequate?

<u>Training</u>		<u>Qualification</u>	
Yes____	No____	Yes____	No____

How would you like to see it changed including specific ways to improve it?

Training:

Qualification:

7. Do you feel career progression suffers as a result of training or qualification inadequacies?

Training

Qualification

Yes___ No___

Yes___ No___

Please provide examples:

8. What are the top three most frustrating aspects with the current training and qualification program at your command?

Training

Qualification

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

9. What are the three best aspects of the current training and qualification program at your command?

Training

Qualification

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

10. Where does your command place more emphasis on a training program or a qualification program?

Training Program___

Qualification Program___

Why?

11. General comments on the training and qualification program at your command? (use back if necessary)

12. I am willing to discuss my views by:
A. Phone Yes____ No____
B. Personal Interview Yes____ No____

13. (Optional) (If you answered "yes" to question 12, please provide your phone number). THANK YOU.

APPENDIX B. PERSONAL QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

This appendix contains the Personal Qualification Standards for the Contract Specialists.

CONTRACT SPECIALIST (GS 1102 SERIES EQUIVALENT)

PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS STANDARDS

LCDR JOHN A. CORSO, SC, USNR

MARCH 1995

FLEET INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY CENTER NORFOLK

DETACHMENT WASHINGTON

The purpose of developing this Personnel Qualifications Standards (PQS) Manual for contract specialists is to apply a modified version of the Navy's practical and simple structured method for developing and certifying competency in a professional or technical discipline to the Federal Acquisition Institute's Occupational Certification Program of 78 Contract Management duties defined as the scope of knowledge and skill required to perform as a Federal Government contract specialist. This manual is thus a practical tool for training and certifying individuals, either military or civilian, participating one or more defined portions of the procurement process.

The PQS follows the organization of the 78 FAI competencies, carrying the individual through activities which develop skills required from the start of an acquisition to its finish. As each activity is successfully performed, a qualifying official signs attesting to satisfactory completion. The Command develops and maintains a list of persons authorized to sign off on a given set or set of competencies, and individuals being qualified under the PQS program are made aware of the identities of qualifying officials.

The ultimate aim of the PQS program would be to support

the qualifications of candidates for warranting. Goals may be established as well for qualifications required at the entry level (GS 5 through 7), journeyman level (GS-9 through 12) and senior professional level (GS-13 and above).

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SECTION 1 - PRESOLICITATION

1.1 Determination of Needs

1.1.1 Forecasting requirements

Skill 1.1.1.1 Assist requiring activities in drafting program plans, cost estimates, and schedules.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 1.1.1.2 Forecast total probable requirements for each of the next several fiscal years, by line item.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

1.1.2 Acquisition planning

Skill 1.1.2.1 Update or prepare an acquisition plan.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

1.2 Initiating the Procurement

1.2.1 Processing the Procurement Request

1.2.1.1 Purchase Requests

Skill 1.2.1.1.1 Accept a Purchase Request or request additional signatures and/or information from the requiring activity.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 1.2.1.1.2 Establish files on accepted Purchase Requests and control information on the procurement prior to solicitation

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

1.2.1.2 Funding

Skill 1.2.1.2.1 Determine if funds are available to commit the Government on a contractual action before solicitation.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 1.2.1.2.2 Determine whether to provide for additional requirements in the contract (i.e. through multiyear or option provisions and clauses).

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

1.2.2 Market Research

Skill 1.2.2.1 Obtain data from acquisition histories and other in-office sources.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

1.3 Analysis of Requirement

1.3.1 Specifications

Skill 1.3.1.1 Critique the specification and related elements of the Purchase Request.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

1.3.2 Statement of Work

Skill 1.3.2.1 Critique statements of work (SOWs) and related elements of the Purchase Request.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

1.3.3 Services

Skill 1.3.3.1 Identify requests to purchase personal or "advisory and assistance" services and determine whether or not to procure the requested services.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 1.3.3.2 For work covered by the Service Contract Act, identify required skill classifications and prepare requests for wage determinations from the Department of Labor (DOL).

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

1.4 Sourcing

1.4.1 Extent of Competition

1.4.1.1 Sources

Skill 1.4.1.1.1 Identify required sources.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

Skill 1.4.1.1.2 Develop commercial source lists.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

Skill 1.4.1.1.3 Apply Qualified Bidders, Manufacturers, and Products Lists

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

Skill 1.4.1.1.4 Determine the need and identify the procedures for ordering from other Federal agencies.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

4.1.2 Set-Asides

Skill 1.4.1.2.1 Make a set aside decision.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

1.4.1.3 8(a) Procurements

Skill 1.4.1.3.1 Determine whether to meet the requirement through an 8(a) contract.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

Skill 1.4.1.3.2 Award an 8(a) contract.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

1.4.1.4 Competition Requirements

Skill 1.4.1.4.1 Determine whether to conduct full and open competition after exclusion of sources.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 1.4.1.4.2 Determine whether to conduct other than full and open competition.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

1.4.1.5 Unsolicited Proposals

Skill 1.4.1.5.1 Determine whether to (1) return an unsolicited proposal to the offeror or (2) justify "other than full and open competition" to procure the good or service offered in the unsolicited proposal.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

1.4.2 Selection Factors

1.4.2.1 Lease vs. Purchase

Skill 1.4.2.1.1 Determine whether to solicit for lease, purchase or both (the Government reserves the right to award either a lease or a purchase agreement, depending on offers received).

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 1.4.2.1.2 Compare offers to sell against offers to lease.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

1.4.2.2 Price Related Factors

Skill 1.4.2.2.1 Select price-related factors for incorporation into the solicitation.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

1.4.2.3 Technical Evaluation Factors

Skill 1.4.2.3.1 Determine whether to select on the basis of "lowest price" or "greatest value"

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

Skill 1.4.2.3.2 Prepare technical/business management "go/no-go" and ranking factors.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

Skill 1.4.2.3.3 Critique proposed technical/business management evaluation factors (along with the corresponding technical proposal instructions).

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

1.4.3 Method and Plan for the Procurement

1.4.3.1 Method of Procurement

Skill 1.4.3.1.1 Determine the method of procurement between (1) small purchase procedures (2) sealed bidding (3) two-step sealed bidding and (4) negotiation

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

1.4.3.2 Procurement Planning

Skill 1.4.3.2.1 Determine whether a plan is necessary, and , where necessary, update or prepare the plan.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

Skill 1.4.3.2.2 Plan and organize a formal source selection.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

2.1 Solicitation

2.1.1.1 Contract Types

Signature of Qualifying Official	Date
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Signature of Qualifying Official	Date
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Signature of Qualifying Official _____ Date _____

Signature of Qualifying Official _____ Date _____

Signature of Qualifying Official	Date
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Signature of Qualifying Official _____ Date _____

Signature of Qualifying Official _____ Date _____

Skill 2.1.1.1.8 Prepare provisions and/or clauses to solicit Fixed Price Incentive (FPI) offers.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 2.1.1.1.9 Prepare provisions and/or clauses to solicit Fixed Price Award Fee (FP-AF) offers.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 2.1.1.1.10 Prepare provisions and/or clauses to solicit Fixed Price with Prospective or Retroactive Redetermination (FPR) offers.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 2.1.1.1.11 Prepare provisions and/or clauses to solicit Firm Fixed Price - Level of Effort (FP-LE) offers.

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 2.1.1.1.12 Prepare provisions and/or clauses to solicit Cost Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF) offers..

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 2.1.1.1.13 Prepare provisions and/or clauses to solicit Cost Plus Incentive Fee (CPIF) offers..

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 2.1.1.1.14 Prepare provisions and/or clauses to solicit Cost Plus Award Fee (CPAF) offers..

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

Skill 2.1.1.1.15 Prepare provisions and/or clauses to solicit Cost - No Fee/Cost Sharing offers..

Signature of Qualifying Official

Date

2.1.1.2 Letter Contracts

Skill 2.1.1.2.1 - Prepare and definitize a letter contract.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

2.1.1.3 Contract Financing

Skill 2.1.1.3.1 Determine whether to provide for Government financing in the solicitation and, where necessary, the method of financing.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

Skill 2.1.1.3.2 Determine the need for contractor financing and, where necessary, the method of financing.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

2.1.1.4 Use of Government Property and Supply Sources

Skill 2.1.1.4.1 Determine whether to furnish Government property (GFP).

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

Skill 2.1.1.4.2 Determine whether to authorize contractors to use Government supply sources.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

2.1.1.5 Need for Bonds

Skill 2.1.1.5.1 Determine bonding requirements (if any) for the solicitation and contract.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

2.1.1.6 Solicitation Preparation

Skill 2.1.1.6.1 Select provisions and clauses for an Invitation for Bids (IFB) and assemble the IFB.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

Skill 2.1.1.6.2 Select provisions and clauses for a Request for Proposals (RFP) and assemble the RFP.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

2.1.2 Soliciting Offers

2.1.2.1 Publicizing Proposed Procurements

Skill 2.1.2.1.1 Select and implement a method or methods of publicizing the proposed procurements.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

2.1.2.2 Preaward Inquiries

Skill 2.1.2.2.1 Respond to inquiries on IFBs.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

Skill 2.1.2.2.2 Respond to inquiries on RFPs.

Signature of Qualifying Official Date

2.1.2.3 Prebid/Preproposal Conferences

Skill 2.1.2.3.1 Determine the need for conducting a prebid/preproposal conference.

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Skill 2.1.2.3.2 Prepare for and conduct the prebid/preproposal conference.

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2.1.2.4 Amending Solicitations

Skill 2.1.2.4.1 Determine whether to amend, cancel, or make no changes to IFBs (before opening) or RFPs.

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Skill 2.1.2.4.2 Prepare an amendment to a solicitation.

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2.1.2.5 Cancelling Solicitations

Skill 2.1.2.5.1 Cancel an IFB before bid opening

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Skill 2.1.2.5.2 Determine whether to cancel after opening and, if so, cancel the IFB.

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Skill 2.1.2.5.3 Cancel an RFP.

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2.2 Evaluation - Sealed Bidding

2.2.1 Bid Evaluation

2.2.1.1 Processing Bids

Skill 2.2.1.1.1 Receive and control bids.

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Skill 2.2.1.1.2 Open, read, record, and abstract bids.

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2.2.1.2 Bid Acceptance Periods

Skill 2.2.1.2.1 Request time extensions of bid expiration dates.

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2.2.1.3 Late Offers

Skill 2.2.1.3.1 Determine which late offers, if any, can be considered for award.

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2.2.1.4 Bid Prices

Skill 2.2.1.4.1 Calculate the evaluated price for each bid and determine whether the lowest price is reasonable.

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2.2.1.5 Responsiveness

Skill 2.2.15.1 Determine responsiveness to the IFB.

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2.3 Evaluation - Negotiation

2.3.1 Proposal Evaluation

2.3.1.1 Processing Proposals

Skill 2.3.1.1.1 Safeguard, open, and record proposals.

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Skill 2.3.1.1.2 Identify variances from the RFP's terms and conditions.

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Skill 2.3.1.1.3 Select reviewers and assign responsibility for analyzing the proposals.

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2.3.1.2 Technical Evaluation

Skill 2.3.1.2.1 Develop and communicate guidance to technical evaluators.

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Skill 2.3.1.2.2 Analyze technical evaluation reports.

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Skill 2.3.1.2.3 Obtain rankings of technical proposals, based on technical evaluation factors (if any).

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2.3.1.3 Price Objectives

Skill 2.3.1.3.1 Reach decisions on (1) prenegotiation positions on price (2) whether there is a need to cancel and resolicit (3) whether there is a need for factfinding (4)

whether there is a need for cost data (5) whether there is a need to negotiate.

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2.3.1.4 Cost and Pricing Data

Skill 2.3.1.4.1 Determine whether certified cost/pricing data are required for the acquisition, and - if required - obtain the data along with the offeror's certification that the data are current, complete, and accurate.

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Skill 2.3.1.4.2 If certified data are not required, determine the need for uncertified data and request such data from the offeror.

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2.3.1.5 Audits

Skill 2.3.1.5.1 Obtain data from auditors.

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2.3.1.6 Cost Analysis

Skill 2.3.1.6.1 Develop prenegotiation positions (minimum, maximum, and target) on each element of cost, the overall total cost of the work to be performed, and profit. Also develop prenegotiation positions on (1) the limitation of costs ("ceiling price" for Time and Materials/Labor Hour contracts) for cost reimbursible contracts (2) the price ceiling and incentive formula (fixed price incentive firm target contracts) (3) The ceiling price (i.e., base amount), maximum fee (i.e., award amount) and formula for adjusting fee (cost reimbursible incentive and award fee contracts).

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2.3.1.7 Evaluating Other Terms and Conditions

Skill 2.3.1.7.1 Develop prenegotiation positions on terms and conditions other than price.

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2.3.1.8 Competitive Range

Skill 2.3.1.8.1 Establish the competitive range.

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2.3.2 Discussions

2.3.1.1 Factfinding

Skill 2.3.1.1.1 Prepare an agenda, notify the contractor, conduct a factfinding session, and determine the need for (1) issuing an amendment to the RFP (2) revising pre-negotiation objectives (3) excluding a proposal from the competitive range (i.e., from further consideration).

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2.3.1.2 Negotiation Strategy

Skill 2.3.1.2.1 Prepare a prenegotiation plan.

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Skill 2.3.1.2.2 Assemble and prepare the Government team for discussions.

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Skill 2.3.1.2.3 Establish an agenda for the first conference with the contractor's representatives.

2.4 Award

2.4.1 Selection for Award

2.4.1.1 Mistakes in Offers

Skill 2.4.1.1.1 Identify and resolve preaward mistakes in bids

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Skill 2.4.1.1.2 Identify and resolve preaward mistakes in proposals.

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Skill 2.4.1.1.3 Identify and resolve post-award mistakes in offers.

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2.4.1.2 Responsibility

Skill 2.4.1.2.1 Determine and document the responsibility or non-responsibility of a prospective contractor.

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2.4.1.3 Subcontracting Requirements

Skill 2.4.1.3.1 Incorporate subcontracting requirements in the solicitation.

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Skill 2.4.1.3.2 Approve or disapprove subcontracting plans for inclusion in the contract.

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Skill 2.4.1.3.3 Negotiate a make-or-buy program.

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2.4.1.4 Preparing Awards

Skill 2.4.1.4.1 Prepare contract and document the recommendation for award (both IFB and RFP)

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2.4.2 Executing Awards

2.4.2.1 Award

Skill 2.4.2.1.1 Award a contract.

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2.4.2.2 Debriefing

Skill 2.4.2.2.1 Identify deficiencies in the offer, cull out materials not to be disclosed, and debrief unsuccessful offerors.

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2.4.3 Protests

Skill 2.4.3.1 Develop and forward a position on a protest to the agency. Prepare a memorandum for record to document resolution of the protest.

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Skill 2.4.3.2 Develop and forward a position on a protest to GAO. Prepare a memorandum for the record to document resolution of the protest.

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Skill 2.4.3.3 Develop and forward a position on a protest to GSBCA. Prepare a memorandum for the record to document resolution of the protest.

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Skill 2.4.3.4 Prepare an affidavit and memorandum of facts for a protest to the courts.

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Skill 2.4.3.5 Develop or forward a protest of eligibility for a set-aside to SBA.

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Skill 2.4.3.6 Develop or forward a protest of Walsh-Healey eligibility to SBA or Labor.

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2.4.4 Fraud and Exclusion

Skill 2.4.4.1 Refer indications of fraud or other civil or criminal offenses to responsible officials.

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SECTION 3 - POST AWARD

3.1 Start-up

3.1.1 Planning

3.1.1.1 Contract Administration and Planning

Skill 3.1.1.1.1 Develop a contract administration plan and instruct Government personnel on their roles.

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3.1.1.2 Post Award Orientations

Skill 3.1.1.2.1 Conduct postaward orientations for contractors.

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3.1.2 Ordering Against Contracts and Agreements

Skill 3.1.2.1 Issue orders against contracts.

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Skill 3.1.2.2 Determine whether to order against a BOA; prepare and issue orders against BOAs.

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3.1.3 Subcontracting: Consent to Subcontracts

Skill 3.1.3.1 Incorporate consent requirements in an RFP

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Skill 3.1.3.2 Determine whether consent is required.

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Skill 3.1.3.3 If required, consent (or decline to consent) to the placement of proposed subcontractors.

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3.2 Quality Assurance

3.2.1 Monitoring and Problem Solving

3.2.1.1 Monitoring, Inspection, and Acceptance

Skill 3.2.1.1.1 Monitor performance under the Schedule (UCF A-H) by both the contractor and Government personnel.

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Skill 3.2.1.1.2 Perform any actions required of the contracting officer under the terms of the Schedule.

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Skill 3.2.1.1.3 Inform the contractor of any problems or potential breaches based upon the Schedule.

Signature of Qualifying Official	Date
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Skill 3.2.1.1.4 Resolve the problem, where possible, without resorting to a formal contractual remedy for potential Schedule breaches.

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Skill 3.2.1.1.5 Monitor compliance with the contract clauses in UCF I by both the contractor and Government personnel.

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Skill 3.2.1.1.6 Perform any actions required of the contracting officer under the terms of the contract for other terms and conditions.

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Skill 3.2.1.1.7 Inform the contractor of any breaches of other terms and conditions.

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Skill 3.2.1.1.8 Resolve the problem, where possible, without resorting to a formal contractual remedy for potential breaches of other terms and conditions.

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Skill 3.2.1.1.9 Monitor compliance with the subcontracting plan.

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3.2.1.2 Delays

Skill 3.2.1.2.1 Determine whether a delay is excusable. If excusable, determine the consideration (e.g., a performance time extension).

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3.2.1.3 Stop Work

Skill 3.2.1.2.1 Determine the need to stop work.

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Skill 3.2.1.2.2 Prepare and issue stop work orders.

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Skill 3.2.1.2.3 Issue resume work orders.

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3.2.1.4 Remedies

Skill 3.2.1.4.1 Select a formal contract remedy for a performance problem.

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Skill 3.2.1.4.2 Prepare a Cure or Show Cause notice.

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Skill 3.2.1.4.3 Prepare a liquidated damages notice.

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Skill 3.2.1.4.4 Reject non-conforming work.

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Skill 3.2.1.4.5 Pursue remedies under a written warranty.

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Skill 3.2.1.4.6 Pursue remedies under an implied warranty.

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Skill 3.2.1.4.7 Determine the applicable remedy if acceptance was due to fraud, gross mistake, or a latent defect.

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3.2.2 Property Administration

Skill 3.2.1.1 Monitor the furnishing and handling of Government property by Government personnel and by the contractor.

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Skill 3.2.1.2 Assess contractors for losses or damage to Government property.

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3.2.3 Reporting Performance Problems

Skill 3.2.3.1 Refer all evidence of persistent performance problems to responsible officials.

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3.2.4 Payment

3.2.4.1 Limitation of Costs

Skill 3.2.4.1.1 Recommend the best course of action when notified of a potential cost overrun.

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3.2.4.2 Payment

Skill 3.2.4.2.1 Determine whether to (1) forward an invoice to the payment office for payment in full (2) forward an invoice to the payment office for parital payment, after written notice to the contractor (3) return the invoice to the contractor for correction

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Skill 3.2.4.2.2 Adjust billing rates and establish final indirect cost rates for a cost reimbursement contract..

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3.2.4.3 Unallowable Costs

Skill 3.2.4.3.1 Disapprove unallowable costs, given invoices, findings and recommendations from auditors, and the related contracts.

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3.2.4.4 Assignment of Claims

Skill 3.2.4.4.1 Approve or disapprove a request for an assignment of claims.

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3.2.4.5 Collecting Contractor Debts

Skill 3.2.4.5.1 Determine and recover debts from contractors.

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3.2.4.6 Progress Payments

Skill 3.2.4.6.1 Approve the amount to pay the contractor under progress payments clause; determine the need to adjust progress payment or liquidation rates.

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3.2.4.7 Price and Fee Adjustments

Skill 3.2.4.7.1 Adjust a price, given a fixed price contract with economic price adjustment terms and conditions.

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Skill 3.2.4.7.2 Adjust billing prices and determine total final price, given a fixed price incentive contract.

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3.2.5 Accounting

3.2.5.1 Accounting and Cost Estimating Systems

Skill 3.2.5.1.1 Determine the adequacy of a firms accounting and estimating systems.

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Skill 3.2.5.1.2 Monitor the financial condition of a firm.

3.2.5.2 Cost Accounting Standards

Skill 3.2.5.2.1 Determine whether a proposed contract is exempt from the application of Cost Accounting Standard (CAS)-related provisions and clauses.

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Skill 3.2.5.2.2 Select CAS-related provisions and clauses for the solicitation/contract if applicable.

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Skill 3.2.5.2.3 Determine (a) if the Disclosure Statement (DS) is adequate and (b) if the accounting practices are in compliance with applicable CAS standards.

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Skill 3.2.5.2.4 Request cost impact proposals and negotiate equitable adjustments, given a disclosure statement and audit findings.

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3.2.5.3 Defective Pricing

Skill 3.2.5.3 Determine if pricing data were defective (e.g., not current, accurate, and/or complete) and the downward adjustment in price (if any).

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3.2.6 Closeout

Skill 3.2.6.1 Perform contract closeout.

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3.2.7 Contract Modifications

Skill 3.2.7.1 Determine whether a modification is needed.

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Skill 3.2.7.2 Select the type of modification (administrative mod, change order or supplemental agreement).

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Skill 3.2.7.3 Prepare a modification.

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Skill 3.2.7.4 Determine whether or not to exercise an option.

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3.2.8 Terminations

3.2.8.1 Termination

Skill 3.2.8.1.1 Determine whether to terminate.

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Skill 3.2.8.1.2 Execute a Termination for Convenience.

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Skill 3.2.8.1 3 Execute a Termination for Default.

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3.2.8.2 Bonds

Skill 3.2.8.2.1 Maintain a bond

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Skill 3.2.8.2.2 Upon termination for default, apply bonds in completing contracts.

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3.2.9 Claims

Skill 3.2.9.1 Adjudicate a claim arising from/pursuant to the Disputes clause.

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